

Delegation leaves for S. Africa

AMMAN (Petra) — A high-level Jordanian delegation headed by Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi Friday left for South Africa in the first visit of its kind. Mr. Lawzi said the delegation would hold talks on means of enhancing and bolstering cooperation between Jordan and South Africa. He said he would deliver messages from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to South African President F.W. de Klerk and African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela wishing them good health and the people of South Africa further progress and prosperity. The messages also include an invitation for the two leaders to visit Jordan, said Mr. Lawzi, who is accompanied by Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

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King, Clinton reaffirm quest is for comprehensive peace

His Majesty, U.S. president discuss peace process, Geneva summit and bilateral ties



His Majesty King Hussein with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on Friday (AFP)

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — His Majesty King Hussein Friday held talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to a negotiated peace settlement with Israel.

Posing for photographers with President Clinton before beginning the White House meeting, the King also reiterated hope that the 26-month-old Arab-Israeli peace negotiations would lead to a comprehensive peace accord.

The King said Arab-Israeli peace talks were "going very, very well," and that "recent developments are all increasingly encouraging as far as coordinating the Palestinian dimension with our Palestinian brethren."

"We are doing all we can, and it is all part of the complete scene," said the King, who arrived in Washington Thursday along with Her Majesty Queen Noor after undergoing a routine medical check-up at the Mayo Clinic

in Rochester, Minnesota.

"Everyone, I believe — the majority of people are for comprehensive peace — and this is the time that we must move rapidly towards the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace," said the King with President Clinton on his side.

"We are working on our agenda and all the others there, and I hope the crowning achievement will be a peace treaty," the King said.

Briefing reporters after the White House meeting, presidential spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said Mr. Clinton believed that "the only solution to the situation in the Middle East is a comprehensive peace and that is something that has to be worked out among the parties, that there is progress being made on each of the individual tracks and we're going to continue to support that progress."

Regent: 1994 could be year of peace

for a comprehensive accord is reached, Ms. Myers said: "That is something for the parties to work out among themselves."

Asked what Mr. Clinton expected from the next round of bilateral talks that begin in Washington on Monday and whether he was planning to talk to any of the parties, she said: "No, I think that it's something that the parties have to work out for themselves. I think we will continue to support the process and urge the process forward. But when it comes to sitting down, I think the parties have to do that themselves. I think the president is encouraged by the fact that the process is moving forward. He's had good conversations, as you know, with a number of leaders and will continue to do what he can to promote the process."

King Hussein and President Clinton met for 45 minutes, including a 20-minute one-to-one meeting, at the White

House and discussed the Arab-Israeli peace process as well as other issues.

"The King and Mr. Clinton discussed the peace process in the Middle East, the Jordan-Israel track, as well as other bilateral issues. Among other things, the president and the King reaffirmed their commitment to a comprehensive peace," Ms. Myers said.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said King Hussein and President Clinton reviewed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process and the outcome of the American-Syrian summit held last Sunday in Geneva.

Discussion at the meeting also focused on other issues, including bilateral relations in political and economic fields, it said.

The King had tests on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Mayo Clinic, where surgeons removed a kidney in August 1992 after finding cancerous cells.

"His Majesty underwent the scheduled tests and results showed no signs or traces of the disease that warranted surgery to remove it a year and a half ago," Petra said.

"He also underwent other tests and the results, thank God, were good and satisfactory," Petra said. It was his fourth checkup there since the operation.

King Hussein, who likes sports, has complained of feeling tired since the surgery although it does not appear to have affected his work schedule.

His meeting with Mr. Clinton was the second since June, to discuss Middle East peace and bilateral ties, which have improved steadily since differences over 1990 crisis.

King Hussein will meet with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher here next week. King Hussein and Queen Noor were received at Dulles

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Yemeni leaders affirm accord

ADEN (Agencies) — Yemen's president and vice-president have reached agreement on an accord to prevent their rivalry from splitting the country, official media reported.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh have agreed to meet and sign the accord whenever and wherever a mediation committee, says, committee official Ahmad Jaber Afif was quoted as saying.

The have "blessed the document and agreed to it" and given mediators "full authority to decide the date and venue of the meeting," Mr. Afif said.

Mr. Saleh, speaking at a mass meeting in Sanaa, was quoted by Yemen Television as calling on Mr. Beedh to return to the capital and resume his official duties.

Mr. Saleh and Beedh have not met since August, when the latter retired to his Yemen Socialist Party's (YSP) stronghold in Aden and refused to take the oath as vice-president, sparking a crisis which has thrown Yemen's government into turmoil.

The YSP's politburo at an emergency meeting in Aden late on Thursday called for the speedy signing of the document and for "the necessary measures and steps between all members and forces to be taken to accomplish (the contents of) this document," Yemen Television reported.

The southern Yemeni YSP called on its members and what it called "other forces" to support the document "to preserve the nation and its unity."

The "pledge and agreement" document was signed in Aden on Tuesday by representatives of Yemen's various political parties.

It provides for removal of military tensions between the country's north and south — formerly two separate states which merged to form one country in 1990 — as well as political and economic reforms.

Mr. Afif said the committee will meet on Thursday to draft the programme of the signing ceremony and present it to the two leaders. He did not set a deadline for the committee's work.

Regent congratulates Yemen

In Amman, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, congratulated the Yemeni leaders on concluding

Malhas laments deficiencies of laws to protect consumers in food, drugs

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas Friday said that there was a deficiency in laws governing the sales of food and drugs, pointing to the need of legislations that would protect consumers.

He also charged that some drug and food importers were resisting new regulations that the Ministry of Health has introduced to ensure that food and drugs sold in the Kingdom meet specifications and standards.

But Dr. Malhas said that a weekly newspaper "blew out of proportion" remarks he made about the lack of laws regulating the entry of food and medicine into the market and about a group of merchants who violate the few existing ones.

In a lengthy interview published Thursday, Shiban Arabic weekly quoted the minister as saying that a good quantity of food and medicine that finds its way into the market is "the garbage of the industrialised world... and is unfit for (human consumption)."

Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times Friday that the weekly "sensationalised" his remarks.

Dr. Malhas said that the gist of what he had told the weekly is that the country does not have sufficient laws that govern the distribution of food and medicine in the Kingdom. He said that there was a need to introduce new laws that would protect the consumer.

When he attempted to address the deficiency in legislation by issuing regulations that would require food and medicine to meet specific standards, many interest groups resisted him, he said.

"There was no law for the inspection of medicine, there was no law to inspect food (and there was) some corruption. So we started issuing regulations based on the general health law to establish 'agencies that can ensure the safety of food and drugs, he told the Jordan Times."

But some people found it hard to "break the old habits" of violating the law and abide with the new regulations and started using pressure to change them.

The ministry destroyed some food shipments that did not meet the required standards, said Dr. Malhas. Among these shipments were meat imports that were transported under high temperature, thus rendering the meat void of nutritious value. Some meat shipments developed cancerous elements.

Shiban quoted the minister as saying that the high temperature of over 35 degrees centigrade in which meat was transported or stored rendered it "unfit for human consumption."

Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times that some food merchants reacted to the new regulations he introduced by warning that they would not import food during the month of Ramadan.

Ramadan falls early February. The weekly tabloid quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that the food and drug "mafia" have been attacking him in food exporting countries where he is being "accused of ruining their business."

"In my tour of France, Holland and Denmark recently, I have made it clear to



Abdul Rahim Malhas

food exporters that Jordanians can only consume food similar in quality to food consumed by Europeans and that the Kingdom is applying strict rules to ensure that this would happen," the paper quoted Dr. Malhas as saying.

Shiban quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that these merchants are "sharks (who) have money (who) buy souls, buy newspapers, buy everything."

The paper quoted him as saying that he has been under pressure from European countries, which export food and medicine to Jordan, to ease the new regulations he has introduced. It quoted him as saying that the British

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Basel, Syrian President's eldest son, dies in accident

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Basil Assad, the 31-year-old son of President Hafez Al Assad and his presumed successor, died Friday in a car accident.

Sources close to the Assad family said Basil's cousin, Hafez Makhoul, 19, was also in the vehicle and had been hospitalised.

State-run media gave no further details of the crash. But the sources, who spoke anonymously, said Basil's car crashed in foggy conditions as he drove to the airport for a flight to Germany. He is usually trailed by bodyguards in a station wagon.

Basel's death is not expected to alter Syria's peace negotiating strategy. But it could have serious repercussions at home.

An army major and head of the presidential security force, Basel was expected to inherit his father's office or at least become a front-man for his leutenants when the 63-year-old president passed from the scene. The constitution sets a minimum age of 40 for the presidency.

Thousands of Syrians took to the streets after the accident, some weeping as they converged on Assad University hospital, where Basel's body lay.

"Look at the people around you and you can realise how popular Basel was," said Corporal Kaser Asfour, 27, of the city of Hama. "His absence is a loss for Syria."



Basel Assad (1962-94)

"What a loss... what a tragedy," said Rima Hassan, a 25-year-old nurse. "Basel did not deserve such an end, but it's God's will."

Verses from the Koran boomed from mosque loudspeakers as church bells tolled throughout the capital in mourning. Damascus Radio cancelled scheduled programmes and aired religious readings.

The funeral was to be held Saturday in Kordaha, Mr. Assad's hometown in the northwest, following noon prayers.

Lebanon's National News Agency said Prime Minister Elias Hrawi burst into tears when he telephoned the elder Assad and heard him crying. Earlier a statement from the

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King, Regent condole Assad

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Friday sent a message of condolences to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad over the death of his son, Basel.

"Words would not suffice to express my feelings to pain and grief when I received the shocking news of the death of my dear brother's son Basel in the morning today," the King said in the message.

"I hope you would accept the warmest feelings of consolation and condolences from your brother and his whole family, imploring God to help you and your dear family... to accept his will and destiny."

"If the distance prevents me from being beside you in person, I am with you in heart and mind," said the King, who was in Washington on Friday.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday made a telephone call with President Assad to condole him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian government and people on the death of his son.

Brown: Arab League to consider Israel boycott

CAIRO (AP) — The Arab League will consider lifting a boycott of companies dealing with Israel, which would boost American investment in the Middle East, U.S. commerce Secretary Ron Brown said Friday.

On a regional tour, Mr. Brown has pressed for an end to the secondary boycott, as prescribed under the Arab League's commercial boycott of the Jewish state. In fact, several Arab countries already ignore the blacklist.

Esmat Abdul Meguid, secretary general of the 22-member, Cairo-based Arab League, promised Mr. Brown to consider the question at a league meeting in March, the U.S. cabinet member said.

Mr. Brown said with Mr. Abdul Meguid's commitment, he expects a final league decision at that meeting on whether to continue the so-called secondary and tertiary boycotts.

"I was very optimistic about his response," Mr. Brown said. "This is a welcome development for U.S. companies seeking to do business in the region and would have a positive impact on the peace process and stability."

Shortly after Mr. Brown met Dr. Abdul Meguid, the Arab League secretary-general left

for Damascus, where the boycott administrative apparatus is headquartered. Dr. Abdul Meguid told reporters he would discuss with boycott officials his meeting with Mr. Brown.

During his tour to Arab countries and Israel, Mr. Brown also has urged on overall end of the boycott, which he says is crumbling anyway as Arabs are drawn in to the peace process with Israel.

But as a representative of the U.S. government he can demand only that elements of the boycott affecting American interests be lifted, he said.

During a three-day stay in Cairo, Mr. Brown met with President Hosni Mubarak and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

He said he discussed with Mr. Arafat the role American companies will have in the reconstruction of Gaza and Jericho after Israel's withdrawal from those areas. The boycott question was not major in their talks, Mr. Brown said.

He urged speed in the Middle East peace negotiations so as to start activating Palestinian and regional economies. "We do need some kind of mechanism recognised by everyone," Mr. Brown said.

Rabin's referendum plan is 'whim' — Aloni

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The plan to hold a referendum before a withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights was a "whim" of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni said Friday.

"It is a whim of Rabin, who did not consult any ministers before launching his initiative," Ms. Aloni, leader of the left-wing Meretz Party, told Israel radio from Washington.

On Monday Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur told parliament that Mr. Rabin, whose Labour Party is in coalition with Meretz, had decided to organise a referendum if eventual agreements with Syria involved important "territorial concessions."

Israel seized the strategic Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and "annexed" them in 1981.

Ms. Aloni said a referendum would be "a major obstacle to the smooth running of the government, which runs the risk of facing calls for a referendum on all sorts of issues."

The referendum announcement provoked a row in the Israeli cabinet on Tuesday, with several members saying it could jeopardise the peace process. Mr. Rabin later said no decision had been taken on the issue.

Peres to consider new ideas in talks with Arafat in Oslo

OSLO (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday he would consider new proposals to break the deadlock on Palestinian autonomy when he meets Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in Oslo.

"We are ready to study with the PLO new proposals to resolve the differences, provided they do not go against Israel's security requirements," Mr. Peres told Israel Radio before leaving for the Norwegian capital Friday.

Mr. Peres, Mr. Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher are due to attend the funeral on Saturday of Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergens Holst, who helped broker the Israel-PLO autonomy deal signed last September.

The Israeli foreign minister will also hold talks with Mr. Christopher after the funeral. Mr. Peres told the Israeli

news agency Iftim he would stop over in London on Friday.

The latest round of Israel-PLO talks ended in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba without agreement on control of border crossings with Jordan and Egypt and the size of the future autonomous Jericho area in the West Bank.

Israel Radio said Mr. Peres and Mr. Christopher would discuss the results of Sunday's Geneva summit meeting between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton and the Arab-Israeli bilateral talks due to resume in Washington Monday.

The radio said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was still insisting that all visitors to the Gaza Strip and Jericho in the West Bank should undergo Israeli security checks when the areas come under Palestinian self-rule.

Mr. Rabin said he only trusted the Israeli security services, according to the radio. On Thursday, Mr. Rabin charged that the PLO was to blame for the deadlock because it was demanding symbols of Palestinian statehood such as flags and control of the crossings.

Palestinian spokesman Hassan Asfour told journalists in Taba both sides had drafted a joint document covering all the points of disagreement over the crossing points, and the talks would reconvene in Taba on Monday.

Self-rule was due to be launched on December 13, but the bandover was stalled over control of the crossings and the size of the autonomous Jericho area.

Mr. Peres landed at Oslo airport amid strict security.

Mr. Arafat was due to arrive in Oslo later on Friday. Mr. Peres said initial talks between delegations might

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Lebanon wants clear Israeli pullout pledge

BEIRUT (AP) — Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said Friday his country wanted a clear-cut pledge by Israel to withdraw from South Lebanon, to break the deadlock in Israeli-Lebanese peace talks.

"If an unequivocal pledge of withdrawal to the internationally recognised border is made by Israel, Lebanon will be prepared to discuss all related issues on the negotiating table," Mr. Bouez said.

"So far there has been no such commitment, there is only an American understanding of our position...but no guarantee, or a mechanism," Mr. Bouez added.



Faris Bouez

His remarks were made in an interview with the Egyptian Sawi Al Arab radio station. Recorded excerpts were released by the Foreign Ministry shortly before Lebanon's chief negotiator Suleil Shammas left for Washington via Paris.

Mr. Bouez said Mr. Shammas was leaving earlier than other chief negotiators in order to have separate talks with U.S. officials on the issue of Israel's withdrawal from the enclave it occupies in South Lebanon.

Mr. Shammas told reporters before boarding the plane that he will attend meetings with other chief delegates involved in the peace process in Washington Monday.

The talks are expected to set a date for a 12th round of full-fledged Arab-Israeli peace talks in the process begun in Madrid two years ago under the sponsorship of the United States and Russia.

Mr. Shammas said the summit talks of U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva over the weekend had given a "positive boost for prospects of progress in the peace talks."

But he cautioned: "We have to wait for Monday's meeting to see if and how these positive elements will materialise."

Mr. Assad gave Mr. Clinton during their Geneva summit a commitment that Syria was ready for normal, peaceful relations with Israel.

It was the first time that Mr. Assad openly spoke of normal relations with Israel within the context of a comprehensive Middle East peace in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from Arab territories.

Syria demands the return of the Golan Heights on its southern border. Israel also occupies 1,100 square kilometres of South Lebanon.

Mr. Bouez's government insists that the Lebanese army should prevent attacks on the enclave by guerrillas before discussing the withdrawal issue.

The Lebanese government maintains it will stop guerrilla warfare against Israel's self-styled "security zone" only after a complete Israeli withdrawal, saying that fighting occupation is a national right.

President Assad and his Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi met Wednesday to discuss the outcome of the summit.

After a six-hour meeting, a Syrian presidential spokesman, Jubran Korieh, said Mr. Assad and Mr. Hrawi pledged to continue cooperation and consultation in the peace process.

Mr. Korieh said they stressed that "the peace process should advance on all tracks, including the Lebanese" during the talks, which centered on prospects which the Sunday Geneva summit has brought for a comprehensive peace deal.

He said the Lebanese side had expressed high "appreciation" of Mr. Assad's efforts at the summit and for his call for the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from South Lebanon.

Mr. Korieh added the two sides had expressed satisfaction over current development of their two countries' bilateral relations.

Mr. Hurd said he was encouraged by Ankara's reception of a U.N. package of confidence-building measures aimed at paving the way for a settlement of the Cyprus dispute.

"I believe there is an opportunity in the next few weeks... which if neglected will produce a difficult, deteriorating and in the end a dangerous situation," he said.

Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş said Thursday his government was ready to resume suspended talks on the measures.

Mr. Hurd and Mr. Kinkel urged Turkey to improve its human rights record as part of its moves towards Europe.

Diplomats said earlier he had raised the human rights issue with Mr. Cetin, asking about reports of torture, press restrictions and Turkey's treatment of Kurds in the south-east, where a Kurdish revolt has cost more than 10,000 lives since 1984.

The ministers also discussed the Azeri-Armenian conflict. Central Asia, Iraq and Russia, diplomats said.

Mr. Cetin said Russian efforts for democracy and reform deserved support, but this should not be at the expense of the newly-won sovereignty of any of the former Soviet republics.

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Turkish, British and Germans differ on Bosnia

ANKARA (RI) — Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin said Thursday Turkey still held different views to Britain and Germany on how to achieve peace in Bosnia.

"Our choice of the tools to end fighting in Bosnia differ although we all share sorrow over the tragedy and the desire to see peace," he told a joint news conference after talks with British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd and Germany's Klaus Kinkel.

Mr. Cetin hoped French and British troops would not be withdrawn from U.N. forces in Bosnia. If they were, Turkey was ready to send troops if asked by the United Nations or NATO.

Mr. Hurd, who flew to split later Thursday and to Sarajevo Friday, gave no clue about British intentions regarding its troops in Bosnia.

He said only that he and his colleagues had agreed on the need for a durable and negotiated settlement, "given, in my view, that military success for any one of the three fighting communities is out of the question."

Turkey has long urged international military intervention to break the Serbian siege of Sarajevo, but its NATO partners and the United Nations have not acted on Ankara's proposals.

The ministers voiced satisfaction with their informal talks.

Mr. Hurd and Mr. Kinkel stressed Turkey's importance in the region, its growing role in international affairs and the value of its political, economic and security ties with the rest of Europe.

They promised to try to "solve the problem" of Greece's veto on financial aid from the European Union to Turkey, which is due to complete a customs union in 1995. They did not elaborate.

Greece has blocked successive financial protocols to Turkey, citing the Turkish military occupation of northern Cyprus.

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DEFIANCE: A handicapped man (left) takes cover from Israeli bullets while two Palestinian boys throw stones at Israeli soldiers during a confrontation in the occupied Gaza Strip on Friday (AFP photo)

Clark to resume Cyprus talks

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Joe Clark, the U.N. secretary-general's representative for Cyprus is to visit Nicosia, Athens and Ankara from Jan. 22-29 for further talks on "confidence-building measures" between the Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus, a U.N. spokesman said.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, "counts on the full cooperation of all concerned to make this possible," said his spokesman Ahmad Fawzi.



Joe Clark

The confidence-building measures were proposed by the United Nations following eight months of negotiations between community leaders in Cyprus on the rehabilitation of the area of Varosha and the Nicosia international airport.

Dr. Ghali believes it is now possible for both sides to "accept (the measures) in principle... on the understanding that its provisions will be fully implemented," Mr. Fawzi said.

In anticipation of Mr. Clark's upcoming visit to the region, Deputy Special Representative Gustave Feissel resumed discussions earlier this month with the leaders of the two communities, the spokesman said.

Two teams of U.N. experts were recently sent to the island to examine the economic impact of turning Varosha into a tourist area and reopening the international airport in Nicosia.

The U.N. chief wrote that the community leaders Dec. 17 on his intention to have Mr. Clark return to the region for further talks. Mr. Fawzi added.

Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş said Thursday his government had agreed to resume talks on U.N.-proposed confidence-building measures designed to pave the way for a solution of the long-running Cyprus dispute.

"We can start discussions, we are ready for talks," Mr. Denktaş told reporters after presiding over a cabinet meeting in the breakaway northern republic, recognised only by Turkey.

He said the government was sending a written response to Dr. Ghali.

"There are no preconditions, there are principles," Mr. Denktaş said. "We are going up the talks without giving of those principles, without making any concessions."

The government had not accepted the confidence-building measures, but was willing to discuss them, he said.

"At least we will find out what is being given to the Turkish Cypriot people, whether they will be beneficial or not," he said. "We don't lose anything by discussing."

No date has been set for a resumption of U.N.-sponsored talks, which stalled in New York in June over Turkish Cypriot objections to the confidence-building measures.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

German troops kill Somali intruder

BONN (R) — German soldiers fired on Somalis breaking into a fuel depot in Belet Huen in Somalia early on Friday, killing one of the intruders, the German defence ministry said. The ministry said in a statement that all humanitarian aid provided by Germany as part of a U.N. effort in Somalia had been cancelled pending an investigation into the incident. The statement said guards with night-vision binoculars fired warning shots after at least two people sneaked into the German camp at Belet Huen in Central Somalia. One of the intruders later set off an alarm in the fuel depot and the guards aimed their fire in that direction, killing one of the Somalis. It was believed to be the first incident of its kind involving German troops in Somalia.

Soviet emigres find jobs in Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The majority of some half a million Jewish immigrants who moved to Israel from the former Soviet Union since September 1989 are working and own a car, according to a poll published here. Eighty per cent of the new immigrants have found jobs, showed the opinion poll, conducted in December by the Tazpi institute on a sample of 800 families in 37 different areas. According to the results, carried by the independent daily Yedioth Aharonot, 24 per cent have permanent jobs in their field, 22 per cent work temporarily in their domain, 23 per cent are on provisional, non-specialised contracts. The poll also showed that 60 per cent of the former Soviet families, each made up of about four members, owned their own cars and 42 per cent bought apartments.

Explosion at pro-Kurdish office injures one

ANKARA (AP) — One person was injured Thursday when a bomb exploded at an Ankara office of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party, the Anatolia news agency said. No other details were immediately available. The agency said no group had claimed responsibility for the attack. Democracy Party, which has 17 seats in Turkey's 450-member parliament, is widely believed to have links to the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party. The Kurdish group is waging a guerrilla fight for a separate Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey.

Morocco to free Briton, MP says

LONDON (RI) — A Briton imprisoned in Morocco nearly two years ago for alleged drug smuggling was due to fly home on Friday after being granted a royal pardon. Driver John Jones, 52, was imprisoned after being sent to Morocco to collect a truck which was found to contain a large quantity of hashish. Conservative parliamentarian Ann Widdicombe has been campaigning for Mr. Jones' release since shortly after his imprisonment in March 1992 and visited Morocco last October over his case. "Mr. Jones' case demonstrates clearly that everybody should be careful what they bring out of a foreign country," she said.

Bahrain, Britain sign memo on defence

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain's defence minister has signed a memorandum of understanding with Britain on defence during a visit to London, and plans a similar trip to the United States, the Gulf News Agency reported. The Bahrain-based agency did not give details of the memorandum, signed by Major-General Sheikh Khalifa Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa and British Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind on Tuesday. Mr. Rifkind visited Bahrain two weeks ago on a tour including Oman, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Britain has close military ties with Gulf Arab states and is involved in billion-dollar defence equipment deals in the region. The United States has defence agreements with a number of Gulf states, including Bahrain, and its regional naval headquarters is based there.

France in touch with Switzerland over Iranians

PARIS (R) — Prime Minister Edouard Balladur has indicated France may be explaining to the Swiss government its surprise decision to release two Iranians wanted in Switzerland for murder. "France has noted the Swiss government's request for an explanation," he said in an interview published Friday by the newspaper Dernieres Nouvelles d'Alsace. "Contacts with Switzerland are continuing through the relevant diplomatic channels," he said. Switzerland protested over the release last month of Moshen Sharif-Estahani and Ahmad Teheri, sent home despite Bern's request for their extradition over the 1990 murder in Geneva of Iranian dissident Kazem Rajavi. The United States has also requested an explanation. Mr. Balladur has refused to explain his decision publicly. He repeated in the interview it had been taken for reasons of national interest.

Somaliland in search on recognition

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — The head of Somalia's breakaway Somaliland republic has said he has asked five nearby countries to back his territory's bid for U.N. recognition, accusing the U.N. secretary-general of ignoring its claims. Mohammad Egal, whose relatively peaceful secessionist republic broke away from Somalia in 1991, was in Djibouti after trips to the capitals of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to urge leaders of these countries to take joint diplomatic steps to help Somaliland seek recognition by the United Nations. Mr. Egal charged on Djibouti Television Thursday that U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali had ignored the problems and claims of Somaliland, which lies in northwest Somalia, which he said were as "serious as the case of General (Mohammad Farah) Aided in Mogadishu." He said the local people no longer wanted "to confide their destinies to a central power in Mogadishu," adding that Somaliland wanted to become a democratic state and organise elections within two years. Linking recognition of Somaliland to the formation of a government in Mogadishu "is not realistic" since the war in Somalia could prevent the formation of a government for some time.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 ... Les Aventures de L'Espace
17:41 ... L'Ecole des Fats
18:01 ... Beaumanoir
19:00 ... News in French
19:15 ... L'Uthman
19:30 ... News in Hebrew
20:00 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... The Family Boys
21:00 ... Local Programme
21:30 ... The Campbells
22:00 ... News in English
22:30 ...

Feature Film: "Mountain Family Robinson"

PRAYER TIMES
05:10 ... Fair
16:31 ... Sunrise
16:46 ... Dhur
16:57 ... Ash
17:01 ... Maghreb
18:22 ...

BBC chairman arrives on visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Chairman of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Marmaduke Hussey arrived in Amman Friday on a several-day visit to Jordan. Sir Marmaduke is scheduled to meet with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Director General of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, and other senior officials. Sir Marmaduke and Mr. Alkhas will discuss means of enhancing cooperation between the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation and the BBC.

Born in 1923, Sir Marmaduke was educated at Rugby School and Trinity College. During the World War II he served in Italy with the Grenadier Guards.

In 1949 he joined Associated Newspapers, and became a director in 1964. From 1967 to 1970 he was managing director of Harmsworth Publications and in 1971 he joined the executive board of the Thomson Organisation.

Sir Marmaduke was chief executive and managing director of Times Newspapers Limited from 1971 to 1980, and a director from 1982 to 1986. He became a director of Colonial Mutual Life Group PLC in 1982 and was a director of William Collins PLC from 1985 to 1989. From 1985 he was joint chairman of Great Western Radio.

He is a member of the board of the British Council. Mr. Marmaduke became chairman of the BBC in 1986.

JEA to get JD 20m in loans to install 3 turbines at Rishah

AMMAN (Petra) — In efforts to increase the country's electric power generation by utilizing natural gas from the Rishah fields near the Iraqi border, the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) signed four agreements with local firms to finance the installation of three gas turbine units.

JEA officials said that the four agreements are designed to help meet the growing demand for electric power.

According to the first agreement signed with the Jordan Islamic Bank, the bank would loan JEA JD9 million for the purchase of equipment necessary for the project.

The second agreement is for a JD8 million loan from an Arab Bank Ltd.-led consortium of banks payable over eight years for the purchase and installation of the three turbines and spare parts. The consortium includes the Social Security Corporation, the Housing Bank, Citibank, Grindlays Bank, the Cairo Amman Bank and Arab Bank Ltd.

The first two loan agreements are backed by a government guarantee.

The third agreement, signed with the Middle East Bank, involves a JD3 million loan, and the fourth agreement is for a JD1 million loan signed with the Cairo Amman Bank.

The agreements were signed Thursday by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Walid Asfour.

American rabbis visit Kingdom on peace process 'support' mission

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An unprecedented American rabbinical delegation left Jordan Friday after visiting tourist sites and exchanging views with Jordanians in a mission billed as an expression of support for the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The tour group of 80 rabbis, including eight women, representing 1.5 million American Jews affiliated with 850 synagogues, was described by its spokespersons as totally different in orientation and ideology from their hardline counterparts in Israel.

Those who might have taken their cue from the images that appear on Israel Television and expected to see a group of long-bearded men wearing religious garb, armed with prayer books and humming hymns under their breath were in for a surprise. Most of the group's members looked more like business executives than religious men.

The visit was not without its controversies either. Sheikh Mohammad Abdul Rahman Khalifeh, spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, condemned the visit saying "this soil has not been stepped on by a Jew since the time of Caliph Omar" in the eighth century.

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"Our past experience has proved that Jews in the West plotted against Palestine," said Sheikh Khalifeh, who also carries the title of the deputy secretary-general of the broader Muslim Brotherhood movement in the Arab World. The visit of the U.S. rabbinical team, he said, means a "plot against Jordan."

"This visit is not acceptable to us at all," he said in a statement.

Officials said the group was treated as a regular tour team with the only exception that extra security was provided to the delegation.

The group said its very visit to Jordan symbolised a yearning for coexistence and justice.

"We believe our very presence here is a story," said Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, executive director of American

Reformist Zionist Association (ARZA) and the team's leader. "We are here to support the peace process, and we want it brought to a satisfactory, comprehensive, permanent settlement."

Rabbi Hirsch, speaking in an interview at the Inter-Continental Hotel where the team stayed, said the delegation's mission was to "listen, to learn and to convey our impressions to public opinion."

"We are not politicians and are not an official delegation," said Rabbi Hirsch. But, he added, "we are not a general kind of group. It is historical for us to my knowledge there was never this kind of group coming to Jordan."

He implied that the impressions that the rabbis carried home from Jordan and elsewhere in the region would have a strong bearing on the views of their congregations.

By and large, according to delegation sources, a significant number of the group members supports the establishment of an independent

Palestinian state while others believe that the shape of a Palestinian entity is better left to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

"We have met with ordinary Jordanians in Aqaba and in Petra, and also with academics here," said Rabbi Hirsch, in his mid-30s. "We are very grateful for the generous hospitality that the Jordanians are giving us... they are very warm and friendly people..."

The rabbi voiced confidence that the peace process would be successful. "We obviously know very well. There is a great excitement in the region, in particular in Jordan, and there is a conviction that there be mutual social and economic benefits from a settlement. We would like to contribute to that process if we can, and that is why we are here."

He said the delegation was hoping to be received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, but the meeting did not materialise because of scheduling problems.

Rabbi Hirsch said the American Jewish community was in touch with Arab-American leaders in order to "establish the kind of communications that were not established before."

Asked how he viewed internal Israeli opposition led by hardline rabbis against the peace process, Mr. Hirsch said: "I am not a politician and that is not why we are here. We are here because we support the policies of the current Israeli government... a territorial compromise in exchange for a comprehensive permanent settlement in the Middle East. We support that very, very strongly."

The tour group arrived in Israel early this week and proceeded to the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba, but a meeting with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators there did not take place.

From Taba the group travelled to Nuweiba to catch the ferry to Aqaba and then visited Petra.

The delegation visited Madaba and the nearby Mount Nebo Thursday. It crossed the King Hussein Bridge Friday morning.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lower House meeting postponed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament meeting scheduled for Sunday was postponed to Wednesday, according to Acting Secretary General of the Parliament Hussein Abu Urabi. Mr. Abu Urabi gave no reason for the postponement.

Group to prepare for public safety meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — A meeting will be held in Amman on Jan. 31 to prepare for the National Public Safety Conference. Director of the Ministry of Interior Public Safety Department Mohammad Al Amad said the meeting will discuss several studies prepared by specialists from ministries, government departments and other institutions as part of the conference agenda. These studies, Mr. Ahmad said, deal with ways of preparing a national strategy on public safety and industrial security. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, called for holding the conference when he visited the Civil Defence Department (CDD) last month following a fire at the Safeway stores.

Traffic circle to be converted

AMMAN (J.T.) — Traffic congestion at the Tia Al Ali Jubilee Circle has prompted the Amman Municipality to convert the circle into a traffic light intersection, according to Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi. Dr. Abbadi told the Jordan Times Friday that work started at the circle Thursday night when traffic is normally lighter. The work would only take a few days with little inconvenience to motorists, said the mayor, but it all depends on other services linked to the project, namely electricity and water lines which are to be in place before the traffic lights can be installed and operated, he added. Dr. Abbadi said the traffic lights between Wadi Saqra and the Rosary College in Smeisani are among other improvements planned by the municipality.

Agriculture minister to attend Damascus meeting

RAMTHA (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Al Farhan left Amman for Damascus Friday to head Jordan's delegation to the meetings of the Arab Agricultural Development Organisation which are to start Saturday.

Qatari Islamic judges visit shrines

NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — A delegation of Qatari Islamic Judges Friday visited the shrines of Prophet Mohammad's Companions in the Jordan Valley. The delegation, which arrived in Amman Thursday, was briefed by the deputy director of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Department in the northern Jordan Valley district on efforts exerted by the government to renovate and protect the shrines. Head of the delegation Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Saleh Al Khalifeh said the delegation's visit to Jordan aims to enhance cooperation between Jordan and Qatar in Islamic judiciary fields and expressed hope that the visit would yield fruitful results. After performing Friday prayers at Abu Obeida Amer Ben Al Jarrah Shrine, the delegation members visited Tabaqat Fahl, the site of a historical battle between Muslim and Byzantine armies in the seventh century. During their five-day stay in Jordan, the delegation members will meet with officials to exchange views with them on judicial procedures in Jordan and Qatar and benefit from Jordan's experience in Islamic judiciary fields.

CAA group leaves for Sri Lanka

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) left Amman for Sri Lanka Friday on a several-day visit. The delegation, headed by CAA Director General Ahmad Juweiber, will hold talks with Sri Lankan officials on bilateral cooperation in air transport.

King, Clinton reaffirm quest

(Continued from page 1)

airport in Washington, D.C. by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the King's political advisor Marwan Al Qasbi, Jordan's Permanent Representative at the U.N. Adnan Abu Odeh, Information Minister Jawad Al Anani and Jordan's Ambassador to the U.S. Fayez Al Tarawneh.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan told Friday's Yediot Aharonot daily that he hoped 1994 would be the year to "cross the threshold of peace" with Israel. But said the two countries' borders must be set.

"To achieve a warm peace,

we need to reach an agreement on the demarcation of the borders between the two countries," he said in his first interview with an Israeli newspaper.

Prince Hassan said if Jordan and Israel settled the problem of sovereignty by satisfactorily basing themselves on the former British mandate's borders, then progress can be made on other fronts.

"For Jordan, there's a clear line that begins in the Jordan Valley, passes through the middle of the river and runs to the Red Sea," the Prince said, noting that differences existed over "the southern part of the

Jordan Valley."

While admitting that both parties had a relatively marginal problem compared with the territorial dispute Israel had with Syria or withdrawal from South Lebanon, Prince Hassan said he believed Israel had a hard time in finally accepting recognition of Jordan's borders and feared it may set a precedent.

The border dispute between Israel and Jordan involves primarily a 320 square kilometre region south of the Dead Sea. Israel had recognised an initial demarcation on signing an armistice with Jordan on April 3, 1949, but following the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 it moved the border a few hundred metres to the east to occupy some strategic heights.

sees Mr. Arafat on Saturday in Oslo," Mr. Rabin told reporters.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters that "there is a good opportunity that a Palestinian-Israeli agreement will be reached soon."

Mr. Abed Rabbo said: "I hope that these talks (in Norway) will help bridge the gaps that are still existing."

Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath, head of the PLO team in the Taba talks, said: "There is a flurry of activity that has been going on for the past two or three days and it will continue for the next week or so, hoping to break the impasse."

Mr. Arafat spent more than two hours explaining to President Hosni Mubarak his concern about what he considers the "meaningless" outcome of the latest Taba talks, sources close to the meeting told Reuters.

Team heads for talks in S. Africa

AMMAN (Petra) — A high level Jordanian delegation led by Senate Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi left Friday for Pretoria for a week-long visit and talks on ways to bolster Jordanian-South African relations.

Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan are among the 13-member team which includes private sector businesspersons who will be holding talks with government and private sector institutions in South Africa.

Talks will be held with President W.F. de Klerk, African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, government officials, heads of political parties and leaders of local communities and businesspersons.

On the eve of his departure, Mr. Lawzi said the talks aim at promoting Jordanian-South African relations at all economic, political and trade levels now that the international sanctions have been lifted from South Africa.

The Jordanian delegation is expected to discuss supplying South Africa with phosphate and potash and boost trade links, said Mr. Lawzi.

A delegation member was quoted as telling Al Rai Arabic daily that the talks will also aim at promoting diplomatic ties.

The delegation member said Amman would be seeking to open an embassy in Pretoria, an agreement which could take place during the team's visit to South Africa.

Women's union to push for equality in laws

By Ian Atallah

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) is planning a campaign to eliminate what its members see as inequality in the treatment of female pensioners compared with their male counterparts. JWU President Haifa Abu Ghazaleh told the Jordan Times.

Specifically, Dr. Abu Ghazaleh referred to the present Civil Service Retirement Law which stipulates that when a retired female civil servant dies, her pension is immediately cut off and no family members or other relatives benefit from it afterwards, which is not the case with retired male civil servants.

"The retirement law and retirement pension systems in Jordan are centred on the principle that the man is the sole supporter of the family, as are social customs and traditions," Huda Fakhoury, a dentist and a noted women's rights activist, told the Jordan Times.

Still Dr. Abu Ghazaleh said, "times are changing, and we are working and

paying taxes like the men. It is our right to be dealt with in cases like this on an equal level."

She said currently, and hopefully in the future as well, JWU would be working closely with Lower House Deputy Toujan Faisal to affect change in these areas through the Parliament.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Ms. Faisal pointed to what she sees as another system of inequality — the Social Security Corporation to which "male and female subscribers pay equal cuts from their salaries, but from which women receive inferior services."

"We have the support, and we have this issue and many others to be dealt with. What women need now is to give their efforts a definite role and shape. And not all of their demands can be met immediately, and they must realise that."

According to Ms. Faisal, women "are also holding back on many women's rights legislation for now because we need the public to be more aware of what we are doing."

She said she participated in

putting forth proposed amendments to the 1969 Jordanian Passports Law and the 1964 Nationality Law, which were aimed at strengthening women's rights. The proposed amendments Wednesday were referred to the Lower House Judiciary Committee, of which Ms. Faisal is a member.

She said that for additional changes to take place a well-organised, grassroots women's rights campaign was needed, utilising public seminars at JWU and, via other, women's advocacy organisations, and utilising the printed media at first, to create a higher level of public awareness about women's rights issues.

"Then, constituencies must press their respective delegates in Parliament, so that these issues are brought to other deputies."

"It does not have to all be done through me only. If we generate enough awareness, then other deputies will become involved."

An area of particular concern to Ms. Faisal was employee promotion. She feels "women are being wronged drastically," and that this was

a major area where women's rights as workers needed to be improved.

Many women are as equally trained and educated as their male counterparts, "but they are not allowed to hold higher-level posts," said Ms. Faisal.

Ms. Faisal believes that women's rights activists have sometimes had "double standards in presenting their case. They ask for certain special advantages as women and mothers, but if you keep on asking for more advan-

tages and special exceptions" ... it eventually becomes impractical for women to be employed.

"Their demands are a bit high. And some of the more extravagant demands come from the fact that they really do not feel equal to men. Women need to see themselves as absolutely equal from the beginning. We will lose some things that way initially, but eventually gain much more in the end by not being seen as special cases."

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Art exhibition by artist Makram Khaghandoouh at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Omar Al Basoul at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibeh.
- ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 8269332).
- ★ Drama entitled "The Happy Man" at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 7:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama entitled "Hamlet Crucified Again" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.
- ★ Piano recital at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.



Indo-Jordan Chemicals Company Ltd.

NOTICE FOR PREQUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS

FOR ESTABLISHING WORKSHOP FACILITIES ALONG WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND ROAD WEIGH BRIDGES

Indo-Jordan Chemicals Company Ltd. (IJC), a Joint Venture Company between M/S. Jordan Phosphate Mines Company Ltd. (JPMC), Jordan and M/S. Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation Ltd. (SPIC) India, is setting up a Phosphoric Acid Complex at Eshidiya in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

IJC intends to establish a Workshop Facility along with necessary Heavy Equipment and Road Weigh Bridges for their Acid Complex at Eshidiya.

The scope of work includes Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of Workshop Facilities comprising Workshop Machinery/Equipment, Welding Machinery, Inspection and Testing Equipment, Tools & Tackles, Measuring Instruments, Electrical Testing Instruments and Tools and Consumable Items, along with necessary Electrical Power Distribution and Supply/Installation of Heavy Equipment and Road Weigh Bridges.

The Company intends to invite Bids on a Turnkey basis from internationally reputed Contractors after the necessary Prequalification for the above scope of work.

As part of the Prequalification process, the Company invites Prequalification Bids from suitable Bidders. The Prequalification Document outlining the site location, detailed scope of the work to be done, brief technical details, the commercial conditions to be adhered to, and the documentation to be submitted by the Bidders has been prepared.

Bidders may note that their Prequalification Bids shall be submitted to IJC with all particulars as requested in the Prequalification Document on or before **2:00 PM on 30/3/1994**.

Interested Bidders may obtain the Prequalification Document on payment by Cash/Demand Draft for JD. 100 or USD. 150 from the Chief Administration & Personnel Manager, IJC - 3rd Floor, Delmon Building, P. O. Box 926787, Amman on any working day till 28/2/1994.

BABU K. VERGHESE
MANAGING DIRECTOR

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Jordanian Perspective

Jordan needs action, not assurances, regarding its stand

By Dr. Musa Keilani

FRIDAY'S meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton was one of the key links in a chain and as important as the American leader's Jan. 16 summit in Geneva with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in the quest for an equitable, just, comprehensive and durable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As far as we in Jordan are concerned, it was an opportunity for us to restate our firm commitment to a negotiated settlement to the conflict and insist on as much clarity and vision in the U.S. approach to Jordan as King Hussein's approach to the peace process.

Jordan has maintained a very consistent, pragmatic and frank policy vis-a-vis the Middle East peace and has done whatever was expected of it in terms of creating an atmosphere conducive to substantial peace negotiations on its own track of talks with Israel. Moreover, King Hussein has always played a strong influential role with the other Arab parties involved in the negotiations to move towards pragmatism and adopt realistic approaches.

But very unfortunately, it would seem that Jordan was, most of the time, taken for granted, a grievance that was hopefully addressed in Friday's White House meeting.

For one thing, despite Jordan's enthusiastic participation in the peace process — regardless of all political risks posed by Israel's intransigence supported by its allies — the Kingdom continues to be punished for things it did not do and finds itself under strange pressures into committing itself to things that do not make political or economic sense.

Jordan was the first in the Middle East to openly embrace the idea of launching peace talks with Israel after advocating a peaceful settlement for decades. Granted, the participation was consistent with Jordan's quest for peace and serves the Kingdom's interests, but it ran a high risk by assuming the lead in the Arab World within a framework of peace talks which had no guarantees of success and which deliberately downplayed the key role of the Palestinians in the initial stage. Optimism against all odds was the only weapon Jordan possessed in that risky game. But it met with more than its share of obligations.

It was and still is an insult to Jordan that despite its well-known stands and commitments its enforcement of the sanctions against Iraq continues to be doubted. All words of commendations for its adherence to the sanctions fade into insignificance when we look at the situation on the ground.

Our importers incur unwarranted costly delays in getting their goods because of the overzealous inspection of goods entering Amman. Our exports are losing their traditional edge in the international market, threatening to deprive us of much needed foreign exchange.

Our exports to Iraq of goods exempt from the sanctions face what is undoubtedly a discriminatory policy at the U.N. Sanctions Committee.

Overlooked in the short-sighted approach to Jordan is also the fact that the binding principle in the Kingdom's stand vis-a-vis all conflicts, including the Gulf crisis, has been, and will remain to be the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere. The commitment to that principle is further cemented by the very fact that part of Jordan's own territory is under occupation along with the land of our Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese brethren.

Over and above everything, our deep concern for the 18 million Iraqi people suffering under the sanctions is automatically interpreted as political support. No consideration seems to be given to the strong relations that bind the Iraqis and Jordanians at the popular level.

The Jordanian economy has taken severe beatings, mainly because of incidents and events that were not of Jordanian making. Of course, there had been shortcomings in our economic management in the past, but the fact remains that the bulk of its huge foreign debts, one of the highest per capita indebtedness in the world, was incurred as a result of unfulfilled promises and the Kingdom's needs to cope with the problems created by external influences and factors.

Jordan relied upon the U.S. for all its defence needs for nearly three decades, only to be told that it could not expect any more American supplies. Given the fact that Jordan's Armed Forces have long used to American equipment and American technology, it was another challenge for the Kingdom to sustain its defence capabilities.

We have somehow survived all these challenges and still upheld our principles and commitments. And now is the time for us to demand from the international community, particularly the sole superpower, to reciprocate with the same clarity and commitment that we displayed to international law, legitimacy and decisions.

Hopefully, the Clinton administration, having had very close dealings with the intricacies of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict after sponsoring the landmark conference in Madrid in October 1991, has clearly understood the Jordanian position. What we are asking for is not unjust or unfair simply because our demands remain very much within the great principles that the United States of America have thrived over the decades and emerged as the leading international power.

We are asking:
— That no more pressure be applied on Jordan to do things

it cannot and will not in terms of further displaying its commitment to dialogue, peace and coexistence.

We have done enough, and any more gestures and actions have to wait definite Israeli reciprocation and clear commitment to honouring the rights of the Arabs.

— That Washington put into practice its recognition and appreciation of the key Jordanian role in the Middle East and its consistent contribution to making peace a reality.

This would mean abandoning the policy of taking Jordan for granted all the time. The Kingdom has its genuine concerns and these have to be addressed before we move any further.

— That Washington appreciate the fact that regional economic development essentially means interaction among all players in the region in an atmosphere of peace and understandings. No one could or should be held at gunpoint and asked to cooperate in an area where long-term commitment is the key to success.

— That, for once, Washington rise to the expectations of the international community, particularly the Arab World, and adopt a stand vis-a-vis Israel based on international legitimacy and justice.

If pressure is what it takes Israel to accept the basic essentials of a just and comprehensive settlement, then let pressure be applied; needless to say, the U.S. is the only party that could apply any pressure of any significance on Israel.

— That Jordan be spared from being turned into a pawn and squeezed in the battle of wits between Washington and Baghdad. Our concern is for the Iraqi people and no matter what shape the political leadership in Baghdad assumes our support and sympathy for the Iraqi people will not diminish.

The U.S. and other leading players in the Security Council should remove the self-imposed political veil while dealing with Jordan and the sanctions against Iraq. The obvious fact that stares everyone right in the face is that while the focus of sanctions enforcement is on Jordan, wide loopholes exist elsewhere for sanction-busters. If the enforcers are unable to check them, it should not mean that Jordan is to be squeezed further and further until it bursts.

We have stated our case time and again, and we are told every time that everyone appreciates Jordan's adherence to the sanctions and the Kingdom's grievances would soon be addressed. We have been hearing it for more than two years now, while our economic losses have mounted, particularly at a time when we need our all resources and energies to address our external financial burdens, but have yet to feel the practical forms of such appreciation and recognition.

We are only seeking justice and we hope that this time around our voice will not only be heard but be responded to in positive tones, in terms of action rather than assurances.

New hope for united Yemen

THE AGREEMENT signed between the dominant parties in Yemen for national reconciliation after several months of nerve-racking tension in the tip of the Arabian Peninsula comes as a fresh breeze of reassurance that the unity of the Yemenis is on the way to being salvaged. Tension had peaked with Tuesday's report of armed air action between the south and north, and it was not clear how far the reconciliation agreement signed on the same day would hold if indeed the report was true; and hence the relief over the reaffirmation on Thursday by both the General People's Congress (GPC) of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh that they welcome the agreement and are committed to honouring it.

When North Yemen and South Yemen took the final step of merger in May 1990, Jordan was among the first to rejoice over the move, which should have come many years ago but was blocked by differing ideologies pursued by the leaders in Sanaa and Aden. The merger was a beacon in the Arab sky, long dotted with shimmering bitter experiences of short-lived unities and unions among the Arab countries. And when the crisis between President Saleh and Vice-President Beedh that hit the surface in mid-1993 grew steadily to alarming proportions, it appeared that the vision of a united Yemen was also destined to be cast into the dustbin of Arab history.

But the underlying belief that prompted Jordan to step forward boldly with an offer of its good offices to mediate the rift was guided by the Jordanian leadership's conviction that if the leaders of south and north Yemen could overcome their deep ideological differences and merge in the first place, then it should not be difficult for them to maintain the unity either.

Indeed Yemen is a tribal-based country, and tribal interests play a large role in shaping the country's leadership. But it is also reassuring that the Yemeni people do not have any recent record of tribal enmity that would be a hurdle in joining hands and going ahead towards national progress that would serve all Yemenis.

The Yemeni leaders have now taken a historic step to reaffirm their ability to bypass petty differences for the sake of their own people. It is no secret that the resources of Yemen are better utilised if shared among the 13 million Yemenis united under a single leadership. The country is on its way to addressing its economic woes, and, hopefully, it would be able to achieve economic stability helped along the way by its newfound oil resources.

By Charles Aldinger
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Bobby Ray Inman's bitter withdrawal of his nomination to replace Defence Secretary Les Aspin raises a major new problem for President Bill Clinton in reshaping his battered foreign policy image.

Analysts said Mr. Inman's decision a week before his expected Senate confirmation was a blow to Mr. Clinton, who is under pressure to solve domestic problems and deal smoothly with challenges by Russia, Eastern Europe, North Korea and China.

"It clearly does not help the president," retired Navy Admiral and former deputy CIA Director Inman conceded to reporters at an Austin, Texas, news conference Tuesday.

Mr. Inman denied any wrongdoing in not previously paying social security taxes for a maid, sharply attacked New York Times columnist William Safire for criticising him and said he had decided to avoid the glare of further public service.

But that left this problem in Mr. Clinton's lap.

The state and defence departments are cornerstones of U.S. foreign policy and analysts say the Pentagon now appears rudderless while Mr. Clinton, Mr. Aspin and Secretary of State Warren Christopher remain under attack for stumbling over foreign hurdles.



from Somalia to Bosnia.

Pentagon spokeswoman Kathleen Delaski said Mr. Aspin, who quit last month amid reports that he had lost Mr. Clinton's confidence, has agreed to a White House request that he stay on as secretary until a successor can be found.

One prospect mentioned

prominently and quickly was Deputy Defence Secretary William Perry, the number two official at the Pentagon and an expert on the military-industrial complex.

"The Inman thing and other recent events, including the West's half-empty threat of bombing in Bosnia, may not be Clinton's fault. But fairly or

not, they emphasise the question about his policy," said analyst Eliot Cohen of the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute in Washington.

"At best, it's another problem for the president. At worst, it's a major embarrassment," added Joshua Epstein of the Brookings Institution.

"By nominating a retired

admiral in the first place, Clinton tried to make peace with the military in the wake of the gay issue. But now even that has fallen through," said Mr. Epstein, who with others has questioned whether a retired military officer should run the Defence Department.

Representative Patricia Schneider, a Colorado Demo-

crat and member of the House Armed Services Committee, criticised Mr. Inman for accepting the nomination and then deciding he was not willing to put up with criticism.

"I'm sure the president would have wished he had thought of that much earlier because a lot of time has been wasted," she told Cable News Network.

Mr. Inman had been expected to be confirmed by the Senate after Armed Services Committee hearings scheduled next week. Instead he sent a letter of withdrawal to Mr. Clinton and told a Texas news conference Tuesday that he never sought the job, did not want it and had decided not to take it.

He told reporters he had no doubt he would be confirmed but he had received word that he would face tough partisan questions from Senate Republicans over private business ventures and over whether he should have paid social security taxes for a former maid.

The former admiral also lashed out at columnist Safire for attacking him as a press manipulator and tax cheater, and he noted that Mr. Clinton himself was facing what he said were untimely questions over former business dealings in Arkansas.

"Why would you put up with that kind of garbage just to do public service?" Mr. Inman asked rhetorically. "I don't wish to subject myself to that on a daily basis."

Departure of Russian reformer embarrassing for Clinton

By Carol Giacomo
Reuter

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials are trying to put the best face on the departure of Yegor Gaidar and Boris Yeltsin from the Russian government, an embarrassing turn for President Clinton that augurs ominously for reform efforts.

Mr. Gaidar, architect of Russia's market reforms, has been viewed here as a hero and driving force in his country's tortuous transition from command economy to capitalism.

Many experts, including some within the Clinton administration, have considered the 37-year-old economist a shining symbol of the reform effort and long ago warned that his premature departure would have to be viewed negatively.

Mr. Gaidar was first deputy prime minister and economics minister in President Boris Yeltsin's outgoing cabinet.

Sunday, he sent shock waves when he rejected an offer to remain in a new government. He said his power was slashed after ultra-nationalists and communists made stunning gains in last month's parliamentary elections and he warned the cabinet was embarking on heavy spending

that would compromise his reforms.

Monday, Finance Minister Fyodorov, another key reformer, compounded the situation by turning down an offer to join the new government, although the decision may not be final.

Word of the defections came soon after Mr. Clinton, in Moscow, embraced Mr. Yeltsin almost without qualification and heard him promise to continue a market-oriented course despite expected roadblocks from the new, more conservative legislature.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher tried to put the most benign face on what was a most disappointing development for the administration.

Speaking on NBC television's "meet the press" Sunday, he allowed that Mr. Gaidar is "a very interesting, attractive person" but stressed that the economist was "the head of a party that didn't do very well in the (Russian parliamentary) elections."

"So I wouldn't attribute undue significance to his leaving. There are other very strong reformers on President Yeltsin's team. And I think the important thing is President

Yeltsin's commitment to reform, which he gave and reaffirmed to President Clinton," Mr. Christopher said.

"I don't think it's particularly harmful if the commitment to the reform goes ahead and other reformers are there," he said, adding: "There needs to be a greater sensitivity to the effect of reforms on the people in the country."

But other expert assessments were much harsher.

Mr. Gaidar's resignation "is a very serious blow" and it is misleading to expect Mr. Yeltsin could possibly take reforms into a higher gear at this time, Marshall Goldman of Harvard University's Russian Research Centre said in an interview.

"When you lose an election as Gaidar did... you can't expect to have more power or a say" and it demonstrates a lack of understanding of politics to suggest otherwise, he said, adding: "It's clear Mr. Yeltsin is taking away from reforms."

He suggested the United States should continue to support reform efforts, underwriting when possible certain initiatives, such as a programme designed to help fund the privatisation of large state-run industries.

Mr. Gaidar has quit or threatened to quit on previous occasions and analysts do not rule out the possibility he is once again seeking political leverage to try to assure reforms stay on course and that inflationary spending is curbed.

Ironically, despite the strong support Mr. Clinton has given Mr. Yeltsin and the considerable time the two leaders spent together last week, there were indications the administration did not know in advance that Mr. Gaidar might depart.

Russian expert Harley Balzer of Georgetown University said there is little Mr. Clinton can do but continue to back Mr. Yeltsin until he sees what the new Russian government actually does.

It would be nice if after replacing Mr. Gaidar, who is unpopular, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would push forward with radical reform but that is unlikely, he said.

"What I expect will happen is that in the name of softening the transition (to a market system) and providing social welfare for people, they will slow things down and bail out the (state-run) enterprises, prolonging the agony."

LETTERS

Democracy is what one makes it

To the Editor:

I would like to take issue with Michael Kinsley's article, "Is democracy losing its romance?" (Jordan Times, Jan. 16, 1994).

The adage that money is as money does, does aptly apply to democracy: democracy is as democracy does.

Democracy can never lose its romance. It could have its innocence tarnished, its tenets manipulated and its luster blurred, but it will never lose the trappings of romance.

Democracy, by any other appellation, when devoid of romance, is a form of government without a soul, without hope, the ever emerging factor to strive for better things to come.

True, democracy is what the idealists seek. Applied democracy, after a fashion of sorts, is what the realist transitionally plans for.

Yet, the democracy with the ample reserves of romance is the one that works.

Napoleon was asked: "Which is the best army?" He replied: "Certainly not the French army, but the victorious one."

Need we say more?

Ludwig W. Tamari,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Basel Assad dies in accident

(Continued from page 1)

Beirut presidential palace called Mr. Assad's son "another martyr offered by Syria in its quest for the glory of the Arab Nation and peace in the Middle East and Lebanon."

Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and a longtime foe of Hafez Al Assad, expressed his "profound sorrow and grief" in a condolence letter, the PLO news agency WAPA said.

Mr. Assad took power in a 1970 bloodless coup and has ruled Syria through a government dominated by his minority Alawite Muslim sect.

Basel had showed little taste for the political spotlight until two years ago, when his photograph began popping up all over Damascus.

He appeared to have widespread support among the powerful security service and

among senior military figures, including General Ali Duba, the former head of military intelligence and long one of Mr. Assad's closest aides.

Speculation about Basel's succession increased when Mr. Assad's younger brother Rifaat returned in 1992 from eight years of exile in Europe.

In 1984, Rifaat had brought Syria perilously close to civil war by leading his troops of the Defence Companies, a special security force, onto the streets of the capital in a bid to seize power after the president suffered a heart attack in 1984.

Since returning to Syria, Rifaat has kept a low profile, but he remains a dark horse in the political arena.

President Assad, who has had health problems, has reportedly been preparing the succession for several months by giving his son increasing responsibilities, including the key Syrian dossier of Lebanon.

The death raises questions about who will succeed the Syrian leader. There have been reports of rivalry within the family and Rifaat, a vice president, has always been considered influential.

Syria has just returned to the top of the Middle East agenda following Mr. Assad's strong call for peace at a summit meeting with President Bill Clinton in Geneva on Sunday.

The Syrian leader had been scheduled to brief Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the summit at talks in Cairo on Saturday.

Chief negotiators were to resume bilateral Middle East peace talks in Washington on Monday, Syria suspended the talks in September after Israel signed its peace deal with the PLO.

Basel's death was first announced in Beirut by Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri. Deputies suspended their budget debate and declared five days mourning after the announcement.

The young Assad was a regular visitor to Beirut for talks with the leaders of Lebanon, where Syria remains the key foreign power broker with 35,000 troops deployed.

He was born March 23, 1962 and was the eldest of Mr. Assad's four sons. He studied civil engineering and was an accomplished sportsman, good at horseriding, sailing, shooting and parachuting.

The president and his wife Anisah have five children, the eldest being their daughter Bushra.

Of Mr. Assad's other three sons — Bashar studied medicine, Maher business administration and Majd, the youngest, electrical engineering.

Voice of Lebanon radio, of the right-wing Falange Party which had long fought Syrian's influence over Lebanon, described Basel's death as "a big loss for the entire Arab Nation."

A radio and television run by Lebanese Forces, the Falange's former armed wing, were also observing the mourning along with state-run Tele-Liban, official Radio Lebanon and other private media. They interrupted regular programmes to broadcast classical music and Koranic verses.

Mr. Berri also called on Lebanon's 128 Christian and Muslim deputies to meet early Saturday at parliament house to form a motorcade and head for the funeral.

British birds of prey soar, but farmland species plummet

By Michael Rank
Reuter

LONDON — The magnificent peregrine falcon and other once endangered birds of prey are now flourishing but intensive agriculture has caused the decline of many British farmland species, according to a new ornithological atlas.

Leading ornithologist David Tomlinson says "the new atlas of breeding birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-91" is "no doubt... the most important work on Britain's birds this century."

Compiling the atlas, published by T. and A.D. Poyser, was a daunting task. Some 5,000 volunteers took part in the survey, providing 1,262,231 records from more than 40,000 two kilometre squares, known as tetrads.

Data on the distribution and habitat of 219 species were analysed by computer, resulting in colour maps showing the numbers of each species and how these have changed since an earlier atlas was published in 1976.

Senior author David Gibbons said the fall in the num-

bers of some once common farmland birds was "very alarming indeed," and that it reflected the ever increasing intensification of agriculture over recent decades.

A similar decline has occurred on the European mainland and has been highlighted in Dutch and Swedish surveys, Mr. Gibbons said.

No fewer than 23 British farmland species have decreased in number and only three have increased.

Mr. Gibbons said a shift from spring to winter sowing of cereals together with increased pesticide and fertiliser use appeared to be to blame.

"Bird densities on intensively farmed arable land are much lower... earlier and earlier harvesting is very destructive of nests."

The glorious song of the skylark, once a regular feature of spring walks in open country, is now heard much less than it was, reflecting the fact that the population has fallen from three million breeding pairs to 1.5 million in the last 20 years.

More seriously, the corn bunting, a once common if

unspectacular brown bird of fields and meadows, has decreased by 76 per cent and is feared extinct as a breeding species in Ireland.

But Mr. Gibbons said there was some cause for optimism, as the European Union (EU) was now attempting to take much agricultural land out of production through so-called "setaside" schemes obliging farmers to leave 15 per cent of their land untilled.

The aim is to reduce the EU's vast food mountains as well as to protect wildlife.

Mr. Gibbons is encouraged by plans to introduce setaside on a five-year rather than a one-year basis in 1994. At present land left alone one year can be ploughed up the next, destroying nests and habitat.

"Setaside can act like a magnet. This could be very beneficial," Mr. Gibbons said, adding that it accounted for almost 10 per cent of the entire British land area.

The atlas has good news to report as well as bad. Birds of prey in particular have made a spectacular recovery after being almost wiped out by

farm chemicals that were used almost indiscriminately 20 or 30 years ago.

Organochlorine pesticides, which cause thinning of the eggshell and other lethal damage, are now banned under EU directives.

As a result, 13 out of 15 British birds of prey species, have increased in population in the last 20 years and peregrine falcon numbers are now at their highest known level, the atlas reports.

All in all, the atlas shows the British bird population is "in a fairly healthy state," Mr. Gibbons says. Ornithologists are already speculating on which species may breed here next.

Many would place a bet on the penduline tit, whose range has moved markedly westwards across Europe in recent years, or the spoonbill, a tall, heron-like waterbird whose breeding population is increasing substantially in the Netherlands.

"One sure thing about birds is, you never know what they are going to do next," said James Ferguson-Lees, a senior adviser on the atlas.

Malhas laments gaps in legislation

(Continued from page 1)

Ambassador in Amman calls every day to ask about regulations that he calls "barbaric."

"The French ambassador calls always and asks me to facilitate shipping," Shihan quoted the minister as saying.

As for medicine, Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times that there were no "good standards and specifications" that would govern their distribution in the Kingdom and many of the drugs in the market were not registered in the Ministry of Health.

He said the law governing the use and distribution of drugs "was among the duties of the committee on the practice of pharmacy. This is unacceptable."

Accordingly, the ministry started to set up a directorate for medicine and initiated new regulations on medicine.

The ministry started to push for the implementation of the law that pharmacies should be run by pharmacists. The Higher Court of Justice ruled in that direction but "pressure was applied" and the Council of the Law overruled the court, said Dr. Malhas.

Shihan quoted the minister as saying that some of the drugs on the market "are 100 per cent useless."

"I am not claiming that all the drugs on the market do not conform to standards but many of them do not," Shihan, quoted Dr. Malhas as saying.

The paper quoted the minister as saying that drug merchants also charge exorbitant prices for the drugs they import. The paper also

quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that some medicine importers threatened to raise the prices of drugs if the ministry applied its new, stiffer regulations.

Shihan quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that he has set up a department that would take control of authorising the entry of medicine into the market.

The paper quoted the minister as saying that a powerful group of food and drug importers are trying to abort his efforts to introduce strict legislations that would ensure the safety of foods and drugs sold on the market.

Shihan said the minister told him that his measure made him the target of a "hostile campaign abetted by some in the press (whose help was solicited) by the drug merchants in the country."

But the paper quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that he will pursue his efforts to put the matter right.

Shihan quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that he has explained the situation to the prime minister, Abdul Salam Majali, and submitted his resignation over the issue twice.

But Dr. Majali had "a different view on the issue; he is for calming the situation," Shihan quoted Dr. Malhas as saying.

In banner front page headlines, Shihan quoted Dr. Malhas as saying that "our food and medicine is (unfit for consumption), food importers are feeding us garbage, and look for cancer in the food you eat."

"I did not say (this)," Dr. Malhas told the Jordan Times. He also said that Shihan changed the focus of what he said by taking his words out of context.

Yemeni leaders affirm accord

(Continued from page 1)

the agreement.

In letters to President Saleh and Vice President Beedh, Prince Hassan said: "You have proven with God's will your ability to settle crisis and reach a happy conclusion for the dispute at the national level."

"I congratulate you on your achievement, and we look forward towards other steps that would guarantee the continuation of the agreement which would ensure further gains and safeguard Yemen's higher national interest," the Regent said.

The Regent told the Yemeni

leaders: "Yemen unity has now escaped from hostile attempts and that is largely due to your perseverance and diligence and the Yemeni people's determination to protect their sacred unity."

The Jordanian leadership, government and people share with the Yemeni people their joy over this accomplishment he said.

Acting Prime Minister Maan Abu Nuwar Friday welcomed the Yemeni agreement and said the signing of the pact highlighted the ability of the Yemeni leaders to overcome all problems for the sake of Yemeni unity.

Tasting centre to improve African coffee quality

By David Gault
Reuter

ABIDJAN — A new tasting centre in Abidjan is at the forefront of the Inter-African Coffee Organisation's drive to boost the quality image of African coffees.

The aim of the centre, inaugurated in July, was to improve the taste characteristics of African coffee through a wide-ranging research and training programme. IACO Deputy General Secretary Mpungi Buyungu told Reuters.

Training of tasters from national laboratories will be a priority. "We expect the first dozen students to enrol at the centre in March 1994," Mr. Buyungu said.

Arabica and mixed arabica/robusta producers already had trained liquoring instructors, he said, so the programme was

intended mainly for students from robusta producing countries.

Tasters use standard techniques for roasting, grinding and brewing coffee and judge the liquor by aroma, taste, mouthfeel and after-taste. Their assessments are subjective, based on their experience and memory, so a long training period is necessary.

The IACO's candidates will spend at least one year at the centre and then return to their own countries for a further two years training under the supervision of visiting instructors.

At the end of three years the tasters will be qualified to coach trainees in their own countries.

The centre is also charged with encouraging IACO member countries to better equip existing laboratories and to

create new ones, particularly in robusta producing countries. Apart from Ivory Coast, only two robusta producers, Zaïre and Uganda, currently have tasting facilities, but they also grow arabica.

In countries, like Kenya, where the best quality arabicas are grown, coffee is graded by taste before export. But until now robusta has been treated as a bulk commodity and there has been little effort in the trade to distinguish between types.

The centre's test collection of African coffees had been steadily increased and there were now 116 samples, sent from 16 of IACO's 25 member countries, Mr. Buyungu said.

"These will be used in the development of quality African blends and in the search

for niche markets," he said. He showed Reuters a sample of popular Dutch ground coffee, whose flavour they were trying to match in the laboratory.

"If we can find the right blend, then markets will open up for us (African countries)," he said.

A typical blend contained around 70 per cent arabica and 30 per cent robusta, Mr. Buyungu said, although consumers in northern Europe and North America prefer arabica rich blends and those in southern Europe tend to drink blends with a higher than average robusta content.

"We plan to increase dialogue with the trade in consuming countries to determine their exact needs," he added.

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Fyodorov warns of diving rouble and high inflation

MOSCOW (R) — Reformist Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov left his job Thursday, warning of a plunging rouble and a lurch into hyperinflation if the Russian government adopted a new populist line.

Mr. Fyodorov, the darling of Western financial markets last year with his tough talk and even tougher fiscal policies, said he could no longer work in a government that covered its spending simply by printing more and more money.

"I have reached the limit where we can push for the stability of the rouble or normal market reforms," the outgoing minister told a news conference.

"A change of policy which the prime minister outlined today includes a promise to fight inflation with 'non-monetary methods'. I do not know what this means, but I am sure it means the end to a policy of financial stabilisation," he said.

Mr. Fyodorov said the rouble, which traded Thursday at 1,553 to the dollar on the tiny Moscow Currency Exchange, could tumble to 12,000 to the dollar by the end of the year.

Inflation would remain under control for the next couple

of months but would take off in April, eating away at the value of peoples' savings.

"If there are no savings there is no investment and there is no rise in output. And as a result, we will have... a fall in the real incomes of the population," he explained.

Mr. Fyodorov said soaring inflation and a collapse in the rouble might encourage the new government to adopt "administrative methods" to bring the situation under control.

This could include setting fixed exchange rates — a clear departure from the market-oriented policies followed by Mr. Fyodorov and other reformers in the Russian government.

Mr. Fyodorov's departure followed a decision from Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and President Boris Yeltsin to ignore the reformer's demands that two leading conservative figures be ousted from a new line-up of policy-makers.

A Yeltsin decree published Thursday only offered Mr. Fyodorov, a deputy prime minister in the outgoing government, the post of finance minister.

Mr. Chernomyrdin sweetened the blow with a tiny

compensation prize — he said the finance minister would be responsible for relations with international organisations and tasks on foreign debts. Mr. Fyodorov scorned the offer.

"I should inform you that on Jan. 18 I made clear my disagreement with the proposals made to me. Today Yeltsin's decree shows my conditions were not accepted," Mr. Fyodorov said.

Mr. Fyodorov said the government already funded between 30 and 35 per cent of its expenditure simply by printing more roubles. This could double to 70 per cent if the new government adopted spending plans aimed at protecting ailing firms, he said.

"We are on the brink of Ukrainisation," he said, referring to economic disaster in next-door Ukraine where prices have been rising at 80 per cent a month and the currency tumbled virtually to oblivion before a frightened government slapped on new currency controls.

Russia's central bank said Thursday it was in no position to put on the monetary brakes as the country looked set to raise spending under a new-look cabinet.

Senior central bank officials hoped to stop a frenzied run on the rouble, fuelled by reform boss Yegor Gaidar's resignation on Sunday, but said the strength of the battered currency would ultimately depend on future government policies.

"Will there be a stabilisation in the rouble? I don't know. Nobody knows," central bank deputy head Dmitry Tulin told a news conference.

The rouble has lost 15 per cent since Mr. Gaidar's exit and nearly 30 per cent so far this month. The central bank has spent \$1 billion so far this year — in trying to defend the currency reserves of \$4.4 billion — in trying to defend the currency conservative central bank chairman Viktor Gerashchenko said.

The rouble bounced back from record lows on Thursday and climbed 3.4 per cent to 1,553 to the dollar on the Moscow Currency Exchange on central bank dollar sales.

But Mr. Tulin said the bank cannot have the economy on its own.

"In any country, foreign exchange intervention is not the sole instrument of central bank monetary policy. When your car breaks down, you cannot

fix it solely by oiling the engine," he pointed out.

"We cannot solve all our problems by intervening on the foreign exchange market. The future of the rouble rate will depend on the efficiency of the government policies," he said.

Bankers urged a hike in interest rates to restore confidence in the rouble — a move which would anger Russia's powerful industrial barons who demand higher state subsidies.

Mr. Tulin was not forthcoming. "Not a single time in our history of a market economy the central bank has ever changed interest rates only to support the rouble against the dollar. I do not have powers to talk about central bank plans on interest rates."

"We face very serious problems with our exchange rate, the fall in production and uncertain political situation," Alexander Khandryev, another central bank deputy head, told Reuters.

"We aim to carry out a moderately tough monetary policy. Our main task on the foreign exchange markets is to avoid sharp fluctuations. We'll keep on intervening in reasonable volumes."

Mr. Gerashchenko, a former Soviet State Bank chief, wor-

ries more about falling production levels than restoring confidence in the national currency.

Bankers saw his staying in office as a victory for conservatives who will be represented in the cabinet by First Deputy Premier Oleg Soskovets, who has strong links with industrial leaders.

"Gerashchenko" give me time for a one-way ticket out," said one Western banker. "If Gerashchenko will head the central bank, we can expect a loosening of credit right away. Mr. Gerashchenko may not think so, but his money does lead to higher inflation."

Mr. Chernomyrdin's upward revision in inflation targets gave the market an early clue on the government's future policy.

The increasingly powerful centrist prime minister told a news conference that inflation targets would be revised to 15-18 per cent a month in the first half of 1994 compared with a 1993 low of 12 per cent in December.

He also said the government targeted a monthly inflation of eight or nine per cent by the end of 1994, above a target of five per cent agreed with the International Monetary Fund last year.

Lira crash may hurt foreign investment in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — Failure by Turkish monetary authorities to control swings in the lira could deter foreigners from investing in Turkey, foreign executives said Thursday.

"The situation is a bit sour now. Foreign investments will be affected unfavourably if this trend continues or leads to other imbalances," said Abdul Rahman Ariman, secretary-general of the Association for Foreign Capital (YASED) in Turkey.

The lira ended at 17,000 to the dollar on the inter-bank market after slumping 12.1 per cent on Wednesday to close at 18,500. It snapped back early on Thursday to 15,000 in response to central bank intervention, but edged lower in the afternoon.

Mr. Ariman expected direct foreign investments to total just under \$1 billion at end-1993, down from \$1.2 billion a year ago. Nine-month foreign investment inflow was \$650 million.

Foreigners have so far relied on a stable lira, which had been falling roughly in line with inflation. It lost 69 per cent against the dollar last year when inflation ran at 71.1 per cent.

But this week's sudden dip in the lira raised fears that the government had lost its grip on the currency, due to dwindling foreign exchange reserves at the central bank.

Foreign company officials were worried about rising costs and narrowing profit margins once cash is transferred abroad.

"The fall in the lira has

pushed up our import costs and put pressure on retail prices," said Erhan Key, public affairs manager for Philips, a cigarette-making joint venture between the U.S. Philip Morris Turkish Industrial Sabanci Holding.

Philips, which is manufacturing Marlboro in Turkey, plans to invest \$400 million at its plant in Torbalı.

He said all import-oriented companies in Turkey would see their costs spiral upwards as lira outlays for dollars rise.

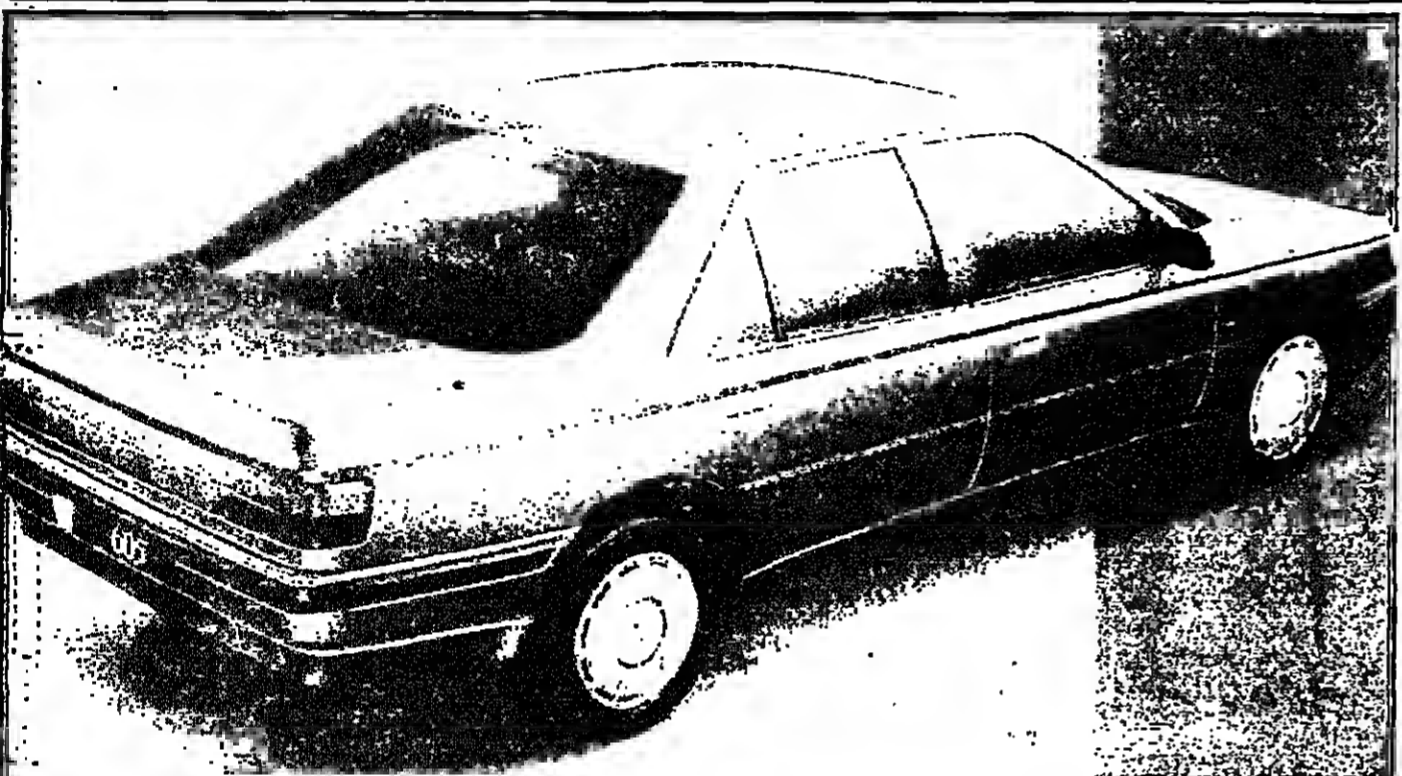
But a Japanese company official was more optimistic. "The return on investments is what counts at the end of the day," said Nihat Avci, a manager at Mitsubishi Corporation. "A foreign company will transfer home its earnings in hard currency. If it is able to do so, there will be no problems."

Brokers said there was no immediate flight of foreign capital from Istanbul's stock market on Thursday, when the composite index gained almost six per cent to end at 27,024.85.

Mr. Ariman said foreigners had injected about \$1 billion into the market in 1993, when it jumped 194 per cent in dollar terms.

"Although foreign investors are concerned with the currency problem, there's been no panic. Most of them are here for the long term," said London Thomas at Global Brokerage House.

"It's stupid to sell right now. We tell them to wait and see the exchange rate and then make the decision," Mr. Thomas added.



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African trade bloc chief slams bureaucracy

LUSAKA (R) — The head of the 21-member Africa trade bloc, Preferential Trade Area (PTA), has said that "bureaucratic bottlenecks" in member states were discouraging foreign investment.

"One factor that frustrates foreign investors is the bureaucratic bottlenecks in investment administration of host countries," PTA Chairman Mbingu Wa Mutarika told an investment forum.

"We are determined to do away with the attitude of 'come tomorrow or next week' as well as reduce corruption in investment administration," he said.

Mr. Wa Mutarika said he was concerned at the slow rate of industrial development in the region, blaming rigid economic structures, outdated technology and lack of resources.

"We continue to produce what we do not consume and consume what we do not produce... we have failed to add value to our products and hence increase export earnings."

DHL reveals investment, development plans in M.E.

CLIENTS attending a DHL Worldwide Express reception at the Amman Marriott Hotel last Wednesday learnt more of the company's investment and development plans for the Middle East.

"More than \$60 million is to be spent over a five year period in handling systems, automation, facilities, communications and information technology," said Peter Wilson, DHL's country manager — Jordan. "Central to this is a \$9 million Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) which opened in Bahrain in November 1993. It is a strategically important element in our development plans for Jordan and the region and will deliver customers into the 21st century."

The function attended by senior government officials, prominent local businessmen and senior management from DHL, included a video presentation on the RDC, which is the most advanced of its kind in the world.

The facility is ideally positioned at Bahrain's international airport, occupying an 44,000 acre site and incorporates the latest bar code scanning technology, capable of sorting up to 4,000 parcels and 8,000 documents per hour.

As an integral part of the distribution centre, mechanised handling equipment has been installed for airline containers and other freight.

"The regional Distribution Centre has been purpose built to accommodate our clients' growing demands for a wide and comprehensive range of expedited services, particularly the parcels and freight sector, now, and well into the year 2001," said Mr. Wilson.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JANUARY 22, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Make sure that your activities today are well organized and that you realize that you have the necessary stamina to complete any project you undertake. Work toward a fine but practical solution.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Make sure you contact close ties before night falls to get their aid and ideas for completing vital personal affairs which must be completed.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Day hours give you every opportunity to quietly learn from authorities what they are willing to do to assist in your personal and career aspiration.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can start a whole new upswing in your affairs by searching your paper and other good printed media for ideas and information you desire.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) The future can be brighter and easier if you adopt more modern systems in personal, business and civic endeavours you are involved with.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) By attending to projects you will be inspired how to deal with partners and other important ties more wisely. Have respect for their ideas, too.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Be of service and an inspiration to others during day-

hours. Then be sure to get out with finest associates in the evening for a really wonderful time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Important you show real affection for those you love and live-in such a way that you become an inspiration for them and others around you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be certain until the sun sets that you follow the suggestions of close ties so that the future can be more harmonious. Step out in the evening.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Before luncheon is the best time to call others and discuss what you have in mind. Later, be equally honest and courteous with family ties.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) Bring to mind the fine tenets under which you were reared and by combining them with own proven philosophy, the future can be much brighter.

AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 19) Show that you are capable of raising level of consciousness during the day time and become an inspiration to others. They make fine constructive plans for the future.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Meditation at locations of your choice or in the quiet of your room will help you to plan the future more wisely in accord with modern methods.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"Our marriage counselor told me to stop blaming everything on you. So now I blame everything on her!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argilison

Unscramble these four Jumbles one letter to each square to form four ordinary words.

GLIBE

CRATT

DULCOY

ISWUNE



How the frugal shopper made her purchasing decisions.

Answer: "GLOBE" - "CRAT" - "DULCOY" - "ISWUNE"

Yesterday's Jumbles: POISE, PUPPY, EQUITY, CLUMSY

Answer: What the nibbler was noted for — HIS CLIP-CLIPS

Peanuts



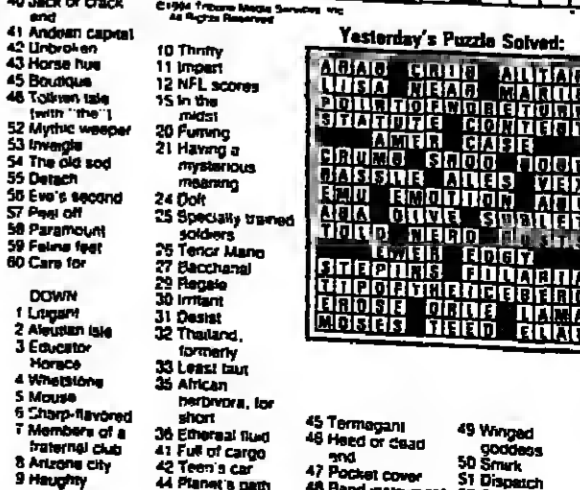
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS: 1. Spread and Spade; 2. Pipe part; 3. Bombard; 13. Beehive State; 14. Pin at a table; 15. Followed curved paths; 16. Solid volcano; 17. Signs; 18. Sailboats; 19. Best easily; 22. Quarry; 23. Loosen; 24. Trident; 26. Yarn; 28. Cartographer's creation; 31. Inadequate; 32. Wraparound; 33. Novel type; 34. Pandemonium; 37. Bradley or Start; 38. Indicator; 39. Odd or wry; 40. Jack or crack and; 41. Andean capital; 42. Unbroken; 43. Horse hue; 45. Bourgeois; 46. Tollway tale; 47. In the midst; 48. Whiffy weeper; 53. Inevitable; 54. The old sod; 55. Detest; 56. Sw's second; 57. Pave off; 58. Paramount; 59. Famine feat; 60. Care for

DOWN: 1. Lurgen; 2. Alumnus title; 3. Educator; 4. Morose; 5. Mouse; 6. Sharp-tailed; 7. Members of a fraternal club; 8. Antenna city; 9. Haughty; 10. Thrifty; 11. Impact; 12. NFL scores; 13. In the midst; 14. Fuming; 15. Having a mysterious meaning; 16. Short; 17. Especially trained soldiers; 18. Tensest; 19. Discharge; 20. Raggle; 21. Irritant; 22. Clearest; 23. Thralldom; 24. Formerly; 25. Least taste; 26. African herbivore, for short; 27. Ethereal fluid; 28. Full of cargo; 29. Antenna city; 30. Haughty; 45. Termagant; 46. Head or dead end; 47. Pocket cover; 48. Band instrument; 49. Winged goodness; 50. Soot; 51. Dispatch; 52. Clasp

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Hosokawa loses vote on reforms

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa sought a last-ditch compromise to save anti-corruption bills and his political future Friday as his fragile coalition government lost a crucial vote in parliament.

The four bills, which passed the lower house of parliament in November, were killed by a 150-118 vote in the upper house, doomed by 17 defections from the Social Democratic Party, the biggest force in the five-month-old coalition.

The result could not only end Mr. Hosokawa's credibility but also delay much-awaited economic stimulus measures and budget debate.

It would mark his diplomatic career as well, including a meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton in mid-February.

Mr. Hosokawa denied he would resign or dissolve parliament for general elections, as he has hinted previously.

"I don't think about such things," said the premier, who has staked his political future on political reform as the death knell for a series of corruption

scandals. "I take it upon myself to do my utmost to have the bills passed in the remaining days."

"Mr. Hosokawa said he would work out compromise bills with the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost its 38-year grip on power in elections in July, within the nine days left in the current session of parliament.

"I can say there is greater room for compromise after such an outcome," he told a press conference.

The premier also said there was no change in his intention of "taking measures as promptly as possible in a way not to cause anxiety to the economic situation."

But a Bank of Japan official was worried about the volatile stock market. "I am praying the market will not overreact," he said.

The government still can put the bills to a special committee comprising 21 members from both houses for amendment although this would require a two-thirds majority for approval.

al. The amended bills can be passed by both houses by a simple majority.

LDP President Yohei Kono said that his party, still the highest force in parliament, which had been angered over the coalition's unilateral tactics, might cooperate in revising the bills — but to its advantage.

"There is the need for both sides to work hard for a consensus in a sincere manner," Mr. Kono said. "We have to see how the ruling camp changes its attitude."

Since a stocks-for-favours scandal felled the government of Noboru Takeshita in 1989, two LDP prime ministers failed to pass their own versions of anti-corruption legislation.

Mr. Hosokawa's package would eliminate multiple-seat constituencies which its supporters say have fostered excessive intra-mural competition prone to the influence of money, including vote-buying.

Its critics, however, say single-seat systems would

further intensify what they called "money-powered politics."

The LDP and some Socialist members also feared the bills, which would also partly introduce proportional representation, would diminish their ground in next elections.

The package has been also criticised for "loopholes" as it bans individual politicians from receiving corporate donations but allows parties and organisations to accept them.

The government had already agreed to modify its package by increasing the number of lower-house members elected under the single-seat constituency system from 250 seats to 274 seats.

The remaining 226 seats in the new 544-member lower house are supposed to be chosen under a new proportional representation system.

The coalition had also accepted other LDP demands to cut public funding of political parties from the earlier proposal of 41.4 billion yen (\$373 million) a year to 30.9 billion yen a year.

California quake victims swamp officials with aid requests

LOS ANGELES (R) — Earthquake victims swamped federal disaster centres with pleas for emergency aid as authorities worked desperately to find shelter for thousands driven from their homes.

With rainstorms on the way and the ground still heaving with aftershocks, officials said they were doing everything they could to avoid further loss of life in the aftermath of Monday's quake.

The sheriff's department Thursday said the death toll had risen to 51, based on the latest report from the coroner's office. The toll from the earthquake also includes 4,800 injured and up to \$30 billion in damage.

More than 20,000 of the region's "new homeless" — about half of them children — shivered through another cold, damp night in makeshift tent cities erected in parks and vacant lots.

Already worried about deteriorating health conditions, authorities said their top priority is to find them housing before the arrival of rain, forecast for Saturday night.

"We need to get these people out of the parks," said Jackie Tatum, general manager of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation.

Storms could also wreak further havoc with the region's crumbled freeway system and with some of the 4,000 homes and businesses damaged or destroyed when the magnitude-6.6 quake struck at the heart of the sprawling San Fernando Valley.

As Los Angeles struggled to recover from the costliest quake in U.S. history, life was anything but normal.

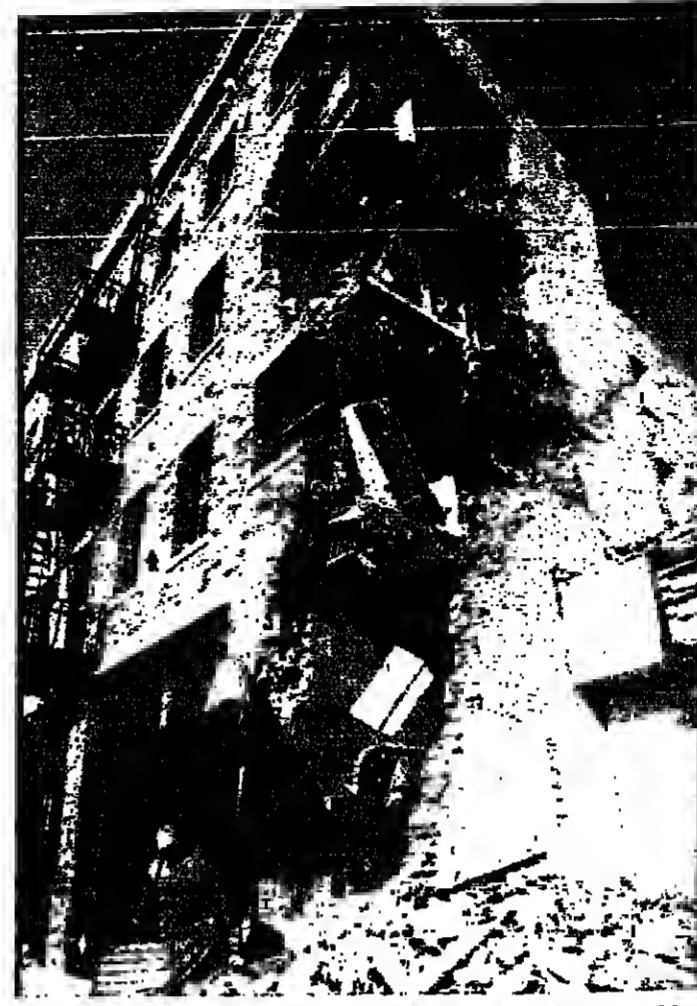
Cars lined up for miles in nightmarish traffic jams as motorists detoured around wrecked sections of the area's vast freeway system. Commuters that normally take 45 minutes took up to four hours.

Tens of thousands were still without power or water. With most major supermarkets boarded up, residents scavenged for food and other essentials.

Residents flooded consumer hotlines with reports of price gouging, complaining of merchants charging as much as \$65 for pizza and \$10 for a gallon (3.7 litres) of milk. "Earthquake victims deserve a break, not a shake-down," said Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan.

Not even Hollywood was spared as celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor, Carroll O'Connor and Jerry Van Dyke suffered damage to homes and businesses.

For a few, however, the



Haigui Alaverdyan of Hollywood, California, walks over rubble after taking some of her belongings from her Hollywood Boulevard apartment building which was destroyed in the Northridge earthquake (AFP photo)

Quake victims lined up Thursday to begin applying for emergency aid at 11 centres that were opening in the hardest-hit sections of southern California. The centres offered one-stop assistance for low-interest loans, emergency housing grants and counselling.

Special phone lines set up by the federal emergency management agency were flooded with calls for help.

President Bill Clinton, who visited some damaged areas Wednesday, promised massive aid and pledged to stand by southern Californians in their time of need.

Aware of the criticism of former President George Bush over the handling of aid after hurricane Andrew hit Florida, in 1992, Mr. Clinton promised a business-like federal relief effort.

Governor Pete Wilson, in a letter to the president, estimated losses could range from \$15 billion to \$30 billion, putting the Northridge earthquake on par with hurricane Andrew, the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

For a few, however, the

quake was just another business opportunity.

A Las Vegas man who came to Los Angeles to sell Martin Luther King Day T-shirts Monday found few takers. So he printed different shirts reading "Thank God I survived California's 6.6 quake," and sales were booming.

As strong aftershocks rumbled through Los Angeles, the damage toll continued to mount.

An evacuated 10-story office building, weakened by the quake and the swarm of aftershocks, was on the brink of collapse and traffic was rerouted around the area in west Los Angeles, police said.

Armed guards, enlisted to prevent looting, stood watch at boarded-up shopping malls.

Residents who were left homeless or were too frightened to enter their houses spent a third night sleeping outside.

Temperatures dropped to the mid-40s (five-eight Celsius) Wednesday, raising concerns that the cold, damp weather could contribute to respiratory ailments among the old and very young.

McCartney confirms Beatles return to studio

NEW YORK (AP) — The three remaining Beatles are heading into the recording studio for the closest thing they can manage to a reunion. "Unfortunately, the world's press has kind of blown it up like we're trying to better the Beatles, which we're certainly not trying to do," Paul McCartney said Wednesday after inducting his late songwriting partner, John Lennon, into the rock and roll hall of fame. Standing next to Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, and their son, Sean, McCartney said he, Ringo Starr and George Harrison will record some new songs "for old time's sake." "Just please, give the three of them a chance," Ono urged. The reunion, part of a television documentary on the band, was first reported last week in the New Yorker magazine. "We said we'd try and do a little incidental music for it," McCartney said. The Beatles spoke up in 1970, after bringing British rock 'n' roll to America and becoming one of the most popular bands of all time. Talk of a reunion went on for years afterward. Lennon was murdered in 1980.

Jilted woman wants justice

DHAKA (AFP) — A 33-year-old jilted business lady from the United Arab Emirates has said she does not want her money back from her Bangladeshi lover, but does want justice done, a newspaper reported Friday. "I don't want my money back, but I want exemplary justice and assurances that no other foreign woman can be cheated like this," Nazma Mohammad, owner of a large Dubai-based construction company, was quoted as saying by mass circulation daily Ittefaq newspaper Friday. She said she met Zahidul Islam Chowdhury of southeastern Bangladesh district of Chittagong during a trip three years ago and fell in love with him over the years as the two got involved in business. Ms. Mohammad claimed she had given a large sum of money to Mr. Chowdhury for business purposes and that he had promised to marry her. But now both he and his family would not accept a "woman from Dubai," she told the daily.

'Too pretty' saleswoman wins court case

LIVERPOOL, England (R) — A former sales manager who was told she was too pretty for her job and should model her looks, on Margaret Thatcher won a sex discrimination claim against her employers, Trinity Gatehouse, 24, quit her £9,500 (\$14,170) a year job with a company that supplied gaming machines to public houses after her boss complained her attractive image might "make her clients' wives jealous." An industrial tribunal in the north-western port city of Liverpool ruled that the remarks by her superior, Peter Barrett, were "gratuitously and offensively put" and upheld her claim of sex discrimination against the company. "He would not have spoken to a man as he spoke to her," the three-member tribunal said. "Our conclusion was that on the completion of her training she was spoken to as if she was a pretty young thing who had to take care to please." Ms. Gatehouse had told the tribunal she was advised to take back her long fair hair, develop a few spots and, as she was working in a "man's world," to portray a more manly image like former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Mr. Barrett told the tribunal his remarks were intended to be friendly advice as the company was keen on presenting a professional image. The tribunal will set compensation at a later date if the two parties are unable to agree on a sum.

Former priest faces 151 sexual assault charges

MELBOURNE (R) — A former Australian Catholic priest was charged with 151 offences relating to sexual assaults against 14 boys between 1969 and 1982. Gerald Riddsdale, 39, was charged in the Melbourne magistrate's court with three counts of committing sodomy and two of attempted sodomy of boys between the ages of 10 and 16. He also faced 54 charges of gross indecency and 92 charges of indecently assaulting the boys. Magistrate Linda Dessau released Mr. Riddsdale on bail until a committal hearing on March 3.

N. Korea on course for showdown with IAEA, U.S. on nuclear sites

TOKYO (AFP) — North Korea Friday rejected the latest demands by the world's nuclear watchdog to make inspections of its suspected bomb-making sites, setting what diplomats said was the stage for a showdown.

The official North Korean news agency, KCNA, said Pyongyang had balked at demands by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to make routine or ad-hoc inspections of seven facilities under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

"What we decided to allow is not routine or ad-hoc inspection...but inspection merely for the continuity of safeguards conforming to our special position," KCNA said, quoting a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman.

The report did not spell out the "safeguards."

According to an IAEA spokesman in Vienna, Pyongyang and the IAEA disagree mainly over the definition of the modalities of inspection.

"North Korea has agreed to allow IAEA inspectors verify the maintenance of its equipment and to carry out certain other checks," he said. "But we want to go further and carry out more rigorous controls such as verifying seals and fuels."

"We know that the inspection will not be total and complete," he added.

The North Korean Foreign

Ministry spokesman warned there was no prospect that Pyongyang would meet the IAEA demand until it had reached a separate deal with the United States.

Washington is leading an international campaign to pressure the Stalinist state to open up a range of sites that, it suspects, are being used to manufacture a nuclear bomb.

U.S. officials, backed by a threat to demand possible U.N. sanctions against Pyongyang, have already held two rounds of talks with North Korea.

The spokesman said: "The issue of routine and ad-hoc inspection under the safeguards agreement shall be resolved smoothly if the third round of the DPRK-U.S. talks are held and an agreement is reached on the package solution."

The DPRK refers to North Korea's official title, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Pyongyang began refusing to allow IAEA inspections last February, and followed this up a month later, with a threat, later suspended, to quit the NPT.

But, in the latest round of talks with the United States on Jan. 5, it had signalled a softer position, giving an agreement in principle to such visits.

The IAEA wants to look at seven nuclear sites provided for under the NPT, as well as two undeclared nuclear sites at

Yonghyon, where it suspects that liquid and solid nuclear waste is being stored.

IAEA spokesman David Kyd said this week that the agency wanted, in a first step, to inspect the seven sites but would deal with the two undeclared sites as a later issue.

Diplomats said that North Korea's decision to harden its position would be viewed as blackmail and set the stage for a clash.

"If North Korea persists with the hard line, it will be on course for a showdown with the IAEA as well as the United States," a Western specialist said.

The U.S. approach mixes an offer of cooperation if North Korea renounces any nuclear military ambition with the threat of international sanctions if it refuses.

But the approach has so far yielded such meagre benefits that other renegade countries could be encouraged by North Korea's approach to push ahead with a military nuclear programme, a source said.

The sudden hardening of Pyongyang's position seems to leave very little time to resolve the crisis, the diplomats said.

The IAEA says that it requires a satisfactory response from Pyongyang before being able to send a mission to North Korea in time to file a report for the agency's board of governors, who next meet in Vienna on Feb. 21.

In November, he had said Sinn Fein could join negotiations for the first time, discuss with Britain the consequences of an end to violence and map out its future role alongside the constitutional parties in the province within three months of an end to IRA violence.

His carefully worded offer stopped short of Sinn Fein's demand for full clarification of key aspects as precondition of deciding whether or not to accept the plan.

Sinn Fein says it could take another two months or more to make a decision, but Reynolds said that was not good enough.

The Irish prime minister said the two governments would make no attempt to persuade the reluctant Protestant majority in Northern Ireland to accept Sinn Fein's goal of union with the Irish Republic.

Ireland, U.K. seek to break N. Irish deadlock

BELFAST (R) — Britain dashed the carrot of key concessions, to Irish Republicans to entice them into backing an Anglo-Irish peace plan, while Ireland challenge them to stop stalling if they were serious about peace.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Sir Patrick Mayhew made Britain's most generous overture yet to Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, promising in a speech Thursday to give "clarification" of the initiative if the IRA gave up violence.

Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, in a speech delivered almost simultaneously, also sought to break the stalemate with a blunt message to the IRA that its 25-year armed struggle against British rule in the province was unjustifiable.

Sir Patrick told at a dinner in London that "clarification" could be part of the "exploratory dialogue" it has promised to hold with Sinn Fein within three months of a permanent ceasefire.

"That is where clarification could be appropriate, not of the joint declaration but of the processes we described in November," Sir Patrick said at a dinner in London.

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Mexico rebels reject peace talks

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (AFP) — The Zapatista rebels said they would not engage in peace talks with the government as long as the army continued to break the ceasefire in Chiapas state.

In two statements to be published Friday in the *Tiempo* daily, the guerrillas also said they lacked formal notification of the government's amnesty offer to those who took part in the New Year's Day indigenous uprising in the southern state.

The mostly indigenous Zapatista National Liberation Army overran San Cristobal de las Casas and several other towns and cities in this im-

poverished corner of Mexico to demand better living conditions and a stop to government repression.

Camacho said Thursday in Mexico City that federal troops sent to Chiapas to quell the rebellion would be withdrawn soon from urban areas, as President Carlos Salinas approved a special tax exemption for the people of 22 Chiapas towns and cities.

As the uprising died down by mid-January, Mr. Camacho was sent to Chiapas to set up peace negotiations with the Zapatistas, but has so far been unable to contact the rebels.

The Zapatistas, in their statements, asked that the "di-

alogue for a fair political solution to the conflict keep to the timetable and procedures announced publicly by Camacho."

The rebels, however, regretted that "conditions for the start of the dialogue... have not all been met because the federal army continues to violate the ceasefire."

Despite the Zapatistas' claims the Mexican government's unilateral ceasefire announced on Jan. 12 appeared to be holding, though Chiapas remained tense as residents feared renewed fighting between the army and the rebels, who have taken to the hills.

S. African election campaign gets into full swing

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The campaign for South Africa's first all-race election got into full swing this week, with President F.W. de Klerk and ANC leader Nelson Mandela firing broadsides at each other in a series of public appearances.

But both men appeared to be donning kid gloves to handle the white far right, generally seen as the major threat to the election now little more than three months away.

The first salvo came from Mr. Mandela, who is expected to become the next president of South Africa if the landslide predicted for his African National Congress in the April 27 vote materialises.

He accused Mr. De Klerk at a function for foreign correspondents Tuesday of orchestrating violence in black townships in hopes that it would give the president's National Party (NP) an edge at the polls.

The N.P. strategy, he said, is to use violence to intimidate black voters and force them to stay away from polling stations, thus hoisting its own chances of victory.

Mr. De Klerk is convinced he has majority support among South Africa's other population groups — whites, mixed-race "coloureds" and Indians — and "believes that if the violence continues until April 27... he might even continue to cling to power," Mr. Mandela said.

The ANC is a threat to the election, Mr. De Klerk riposted Thursday in the farming town of Potchefstroom, describing the mainstream black movement as a "dangerous party."

"They preach tolerance, they practice intimidation and aggression," he told the mainly white student body of Potchefstroom University. "Their supporters intimidate everyone who doesn't agree with them."

"If the ANC gets too much power, dark days lie ahead," he warned in the mining town of Fochville, the first stop of a three-day campaign swing through western Transvaal.

On Friday, he told AFP in Klerksdorp that he was having trouble campaigning in black townships because of ANC harassment.

"When I go into a black township I am up against a real threat of violence," he said. "We constantly meet intimidation in the form of incidents of aggression."

"How can you vote for people who threaten to burn your house and assault you if you don't do what they say?" he asked black commuters at a taxi rank near Klerksdorp.

ANC supporters jeered and shouted "liar."

In contrast to their mutual attacks, both men have been more moderate when speaking of the far right, organised into a Freedom Alliance of black and white right-wing groups.

The ANC, Mr. Mandela said Friday, takes the alliance's demands for greater federal guarantees in the new constitution very seriously and will address them "to the best of our abilities."

"In the great effort to create a new society and a new nation, we dare not fail," he warned. "History and the world will judge us very harshly if we do not do what is just and correct — we will not have a second chance."

In his tour of western Transvaal, a major power base for white extremists, Mr. De Klerk said the white homeland they seek was impractical.

The "bitterness" between Afrikaners pains him deeply, Mr. De Klerk said, calling for unity ahead of the election and warning that the Afrikaners must drop their extremist stance if they want their "volk" (nation) to survive.

"In South Africa, there are three million Afrikaners in a total population of 32 million," he said. "If just cannot work."

"The Afrikaner volk can only survive if it can live in peace with all South Africans," he said.

Two opinion surveys of voting intentions conducted this month give the ANC between 64 and 67 per cent of the vote, the NP 16 to 17 per cent and the parties that make up the Freedom Alliance between nine and 13 per cent.

Mr. Mandela said Thursday white right-wing radicals demanding self-rule posed a serious threat to South Africa's future, the South African Press Association reported.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Battlefield survivors head for Lillehammer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AFP) — Nine competitors from besieged Bosnia will take part in next month's Winter Olympics at Lillehammer in Norway. "We don't expect to win any medals but the important thing is to take part," Bosnia-Herzegovina Olympic Committee Executive Director Predrag Medjeski said here Friday. Alpine and cross-country skiers and luge tobogganists have been training here, in Slovenia and in Norway although two of the bobsleigh team were still trapped in the Sarajevo battlefield. "We hope they can get to Germany this week," Out Medjeski said. The German National Olympic Committee have been paying for training and accommodation for competitors from the city which 10 years ago put on one of the happiest games in modern times.

Senna starts from zero

PARIS (AFP) — Brazilian Ayrton Senna will drive with the number zero during next season's Formula One world championship, world governing body FIA announced here Friday. Britain's Damon Hill takes the number two car, with number one, traditionally reserved for the world champion, missing because of the retirement of title holder Alain Prost of France.

Indonesia bars Magic Johnson

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's immigration director said Friday that former U.S. basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson will not be allowed to enter the country next month, but that the decision could be overruled by either the health or sports ministers. Johnson, who is scheduled to play in an exhibition game here, has the human immune-deficiency virus (HIV), the precursor to the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). "If he insists to visit, we will refuse him," Immigration Director General Roni Sikap Sinuraya told journalists. "The law stipulates that the immigration officials are allowed to bar a person who suffers from insanity or contagious diseases to enter the country," Roni said. An exception could be made by the health minister or the youth affairs and sports minister if one of them decided the benefits of the visit would outweigh the risks. The two ministers have not recommended the visit, he said.

Sudanese team wins African Cup

KHARTOUM (R) — Al Merreikh of Sudan won the 1994 East and Central African Club Soccer Championship Thursday, beating Express of Uganda 2-1 in the final in Khartoum. Al-Merreikh, which last won the cup in 1986, went 1-0 up in the first half of Sudan's main stadium. It extended its lead to 2-0 early in the second half. Express pulled one goal back. This year the competition was dogged by crowd trouble with Sudanese fans stoning visiting players and attacking the referee during Al Merreikh's semi-final match with Simba of Tanzania. Simba withdrew from the competition in protest. Next year's championship will be played in Zanzibar.

Petrenko win men's title

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Viktor Petrenko gained his third European men's title Thursday as he paced a Ukrainian sweep of the top two positions at the European figure skating championships. Ukrainian teammate Viacheslav Zagorodniuk was second ahead of Russian Alexei Urmanov third. Halfway through the ice dance competition, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean battled back into contention the best way they know how — with a sultry dance to a romantic beat. "We were in love for two minutes while we danced," said Torvill. "And are still good friends." Petrenko won European titles in 1990 and 1991 as a member of the Soviet Union team. He took the 1992 Olympic title for the unified team and captured the world crown that year representing the Commonwealth of Independent States. He returned to amateur competition after being reinstated following a year as a professional. "The time I spent there was good," Petrenko said. "I learned how to perform in front of people." He wasn't in top form. He tried seven triple jumps and two-footed a pair. But two triple axels combinations helped him to get from 5.5 to 5.8 for technical merit.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TAMMAM HIRSH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A10KQ85 OAK76 ♣QJ854
What is your opening bid?
A.—A one-club opening bid works fine if partner responds in one of the red suits. The problem arises when partner's response is one spade or one trump. Following the Principle of Opening bids, we would opt for an opening bid of one diamond, allowing us to rebid two clubs if partner does not raise or bid hearts.
- Q2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A984 ♣98 OAK5 ♠K105
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one heart. What action do you take?
A.—You have a good hand, but don't get carried away. Unless partner can act freely, you are going nowhere. A one-spade overall is all your hand warrants for the moment.
- Q3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠853 ♣9732 ♠1092 ♠A4
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♣ 1 ♠ 1 ♣ 1 ♠
What do you bid now?
A.—It's simply a matter of how many hearts to bid. Had the bid not been balanced we would have favored four hearts. Our length in hearts detracts from partner's defensive capability, so we feel partner might expect more defense if we simply raise to two hearts. That swings the decision to a preemptive jump to three hearts, which is just about right.
- Q4—North-South vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A984 ♣98 OAK5 ♠K105
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?
A.—If we could be sure that, over a one-no-trump response, partner would bid a new suit that would be our choice. Unfortunately, we have found that partner usually worsens the predicament by rebidding two spades or raising no trump. Our choice would be to pass. We don't mind if the opponents get into the act because our values are better suited to defense than offense.
- Q5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A984 ♣98 OAK5 ♠K105
As South, what is your opening bid?
A.—If you play that all two-bids are natural and forcing, by all means open two clubs. If, however, your two-club openings are game-forcing and artificial and you choose that bid, a three-diamond response from partner or preemptive tactics by the opponents, among other things that might happen, could result in your losing the heart suit. Our choice would be one club.
- Q6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A984 ♣98 OAK5 ♠K105
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?
A.—If we could be sure that, over a one-no-trump response, partner would bid a new suit that would be our choice. Unfortunately, we have found that partner usually worsens the predicament by rebidding two spades or raising no trump. Our choice would be to pass. We don't mind if the opponents get into the act because our values are better suited to defense than offense.

Under-19 basketball tournament to resume

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It seems the 1993 basketball season is not over yet!

The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) recently decided to go ahead with the final round of the under-19 tournament. Therefore, fans will get to see their favorite teams clash once again as titleholders Al Ahli face Al Orthodoxy, while Al Abbasi take on Al Jazireh Saturday at the sports palace.

After the JBF's decision to cancel the U-22 tournament, the U-19 competition is the last chance for Al Orthodoxy to clinch once of the season's trophies.

Al Ahli will seek to retain their title and add another trophy after their latest win over Al Orthodoxy in the first division championship.

Al Jazireh on the other hand seem eager to add the U-19 title to the U-14, U-16 and women's titles they secured in 1993.

Seven teams had originally taken part in the competition which began Oct. 10. Al Ahli, Al Orthodoxy, Al Jazireh and Al Abbasi made it to the second round.

Al Hussein, Al Mafrag and Abu Nusair finished in 5-7 places. Al Jalil, Homentmen, and Al Watan did not compete this season.

The final round of the competition was indefinitely postponed following the resump-

tion of the first division competition after the national team's participation in the Asian Championship.

Al Jazireh led the standings after the first round following the JBF's decision to award them the win against Al Orthodoxy after the latter pulled out of the match, with Al Jazireh leading 25-20.

Al Jazireh beat Al Mafrag 142-21, Al Hussein 133-39 and Abu Nusair 170-35.

Al Ahli also scored impressive wins against most teams. However, they came in second after missing their match against Al Hussein.

Al Ahli defeated Al Jazireh 73-57 and Al Orthodoxy 79-46. They also scored big wins over Al Abbasi 106-40, Abu Nusair 136-21 and Al Mafrag 164-19.

Al Orthodoxy thus finished third with two losses to Al Ahli and Al Jazireh. They scored convincing wins of their own defeating Al Hussein 75-17, Abu Nusair 124-23 and Al Mafrag 115-28.

Al Abbasi seemed to be the surprise of the tournament, qualifying to the second round after a 93-51 upset over favorites Al Hussein. They managed to score satisfactory results against top teams, losing 65-41 to Al Jazireh and 67-44 to Al Orthodoxy.

Al Abbasi beat Al Mafrag 84-20 and Abu Nusair 106-26. The tournament is set to be completed Jan. 29, giving fans, players and officials a brief break before the JBF issues the 1994 calendar of events.

Standings after 1st round

	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
★ Jazireh	6	5	1	569	209	11
★ Ahli	6	5	1	558	185	10**
★ Orthodoxy	6	4	2	427	183	9**
★ Abbasi	6	3	3	408	355	9
Hussein	6	3	3	237	370	9
Mafrag	6	1	5	164	601	7
Abu Nusair	6	—	6	176	656	6

★ Qualified to second round
★ Ahli, Orthodoxy lost one point each due to withdrawals against Hussein and Jazireh.

Kerrigan lands difficult jumps in practice

STONEHAM, Mass. (AP) — Nancy Kerrigan donned a white figure skating costume and completed her most difficult jumps Thursday on her road to recovery from the Jan. 6 clubbing of her right knee.

"Her hardest jump is the double-axel and she landed that today and she did it beautifully," said Kerrigan's father, Dan Kerrigan. "Her knee is a little stiff, but she's doing great."

For a second day, Kerrigan's entourage had no comment about the arrest of rival Tonya Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, in connection with the attack that kept her out of the national championships.

"We're only concerned about Nancy," Dan Kerrigan said.

Shawn Eckardt, Harding's bodyguard, who has been charged in the assault, said in an interview published Thursday that Harding was involved in the purported scheme. Harding, through an attorney, denied the allegation.

Asked if she was looking forward to appearing with Harding in the Olympics, Kerrigan responded: "I'm looking forward to going to the Olympics, yeah."

Records have been released showing phone calls were made to Kerrigan's practice rink, the Tony Kent Arena in South Dennis, from Harding's house in Oregon.

Eckardt told a sheriff's deputy that Harding made the calls so the alleged hit man, Shane Minoaka Stant, could attack Kerrigan before she left for the national championships in Detroit. Stant allegedly stalked Kerrigan in Massachusetts but didn't get the chance to carry out the assault until Jan. 6 in Detroit.

Kerrigan was smashed on the right leg because it was her landing leg for jumps. Eckardt told authorities.

Kerrigan was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles Friday to film a television commercial for Reebok.

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AUSTRALIAN OPEN
Graf, Lendl advance to round of 16

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Three-time champion Steffi Graf overwhelmed fellow German Barbara Rittner 6-2, 6-4 Friday to advance to the last 16 of the women's singles at the Australian Open.

Graf, the top seed in the enforced absence of defending champion Monica Seles, was twice interrupted by rain showers but used her lethal forehand to bludgeon her way to victory.

Graf has been using weights to build up her strength while a new racket has given her added confidence and aggression at the net.

"I feel a lot better around the net now," she said. "I kind of know where the ball is going, so I feel more secure."

Graf, winner of the Australian Open in 1988 and 1990, now will face unseeded Sandrine Testud of France in the fourth round of the opening Grand Slam tournament of the year.

Testud, a 21-year-old from Lyon who had not previously made it past the second round of any Grand Slam, downed 13th-seeded Helena Sukova of the Czech republic 6-4, 6-3.

No. 3 seed Conchita Martinez of Spain and No. 16 Lindsay Davenport of the United States also scored clear-cut victories.

Martinez blasted American Amy Frazier 6-3, 6-0 and Davenport breezed by Elena Makarova of Russia 6-1, 6-2.

Two-time men's champion Ivan Lendl continued his resurgence after a disappointing 1993, beating Dutchman Paul Haarhuis to advance to the fourth round, where he could meet top seed Pete Sampras.

Lendl, the No. 15 seed, downed Haarhuis 5-6, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 in a match played indoors after the centre court roof was closed.

Two big servers — Marc Rosset of Switzerland and Germany's Joern Renssenbrink — had difficulty with their ball toss while serving in damp and windy conditions early in the day and both were eliminated from

the men's singles.

South African Grant Stafford made the round of 16 at a Grand Slam for the first time by downing 11th-seeded Rosset 3-6, 6-2, 6-2, 6-1, while no. 10 Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden caused Renssenbrink 6-2, 6-2, 6-2.

"The ball was swirling around so much in the air that it was really difficult for guys who rely on a big serve," Gustafsson said.

"I did my job, but he really didn't play well at all."

Graf was in superb form against Rittner until she lost concentration late in the second set.

"It's really difficult, Steffi is hitting the ball so hard," said 20-year-old Rittner.

"I had a game plan but it wasn't worth anything. She serves so hard there's nothing you can do. The score just depends on how many mistakes she is making."

Rittner led 2-1 before a rain interruption, but said the delays made no difference to the result.

"It was the same for both players," she said.

Graf is seeking her 15th Grand Slam title, her fourth in a row and hoping to keep alive a streak of having won at least one slam event in each of the last seven years.

Unseeded American Chanda Rubin, 17, advanced to the fourth round, where she will play Martinez, with a 6-3, 7-6 (7-1) win over Australian Kristine Radford.

"With the wind today I figured it would be better to get placement on my serve rather than worry about pace," Rubin said.

"It was a little rough, it was kind of an ugly match."

Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, seeded 14, completed a 6-2, 6-4 second-round win over Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan in a match that had been halted by rain Thursday evening.

The tournament is sponsored by Ford, played on synthetic rebound ace courts and continues through Jan. 30.



Steffi Graf

Graf reveals painful truth

MELBOURNE (R) — Steffi Graf revealed Friday she played in almost continuous pain throughout 1993 and became depressed by her enforced visits to doctors and specialists.

World number one Graf still won three Grand Slam titles — Wimbledon and the French and U.S. Opens — but was often unable to play without pain-killing injections and doses of pills.

"Even during the championships, I did that almost the whole year through. It was very disturbing and depressing," said Graf, after reaching the last 16 of the Australian Open.

"The two weeks between the French Open and Wimbledon were particularly bad. Making the decision to play at Wimble-

don was very difficult but I made the right decision."

Graf eventually had surgery to remove bone fragments from her right foot in October, ending months of worry about her health.

"One day I played without injections because I thought I could do it and it wasn't possible," said Graf. "Every morning I just went to the doctor to get fit. Every time I won a tournament I couldn't believe it, really. I didn't want to do that any more."

"Last year was a great year on the one side because of all the successes, but on the other it was one I didn't want to have again, injury-wise."

Graf has since embarked on an extensive weight-training schedule.

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TENDER INVITATION

UNESCO is providing urgent humanitarian assistance to Iraq to rehabilitate schools.
In order to carry out this task, the procurement of materials for building renovation and the local manufacturing of school furniture will be effected through international competitive bidding. Contracts for a total value of approximately US\$300,000 are foreseen. Tender documents may be obtained from UNEDBAS, P.O. Box 2270, Tel: 606559, Fax: 682183, Amman, Jordan. The bid closing date is Monday 7 February 1994.
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The Lady's Chauffeur
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Iraq says it is trying to curb human right abuses

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said on Friday there were cases of human rights abuses in the country but it was striving to curtail such violations.

"There are cases. But the state and its specialised organs are trying not to let such individual cases become a phenomenon," Iraq's Justice Minister Shabib Al Maliki told Reuters.

Mr. Maliki said foreign reports of widespread violations in Iraq were exaggerated "in order to offer unrealistic justification" to continue with the U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq. "What is being published outside Iraq is inflated. There are many guarantees in the constitution and laws that provide enough protection..." he said.

Mr. Maliki said human rights organisations should focus their attention on the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by a stringent U.N. embargo imposed to punish Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The embargo is the gravest violation of human rights," he said.

The minister said there had been cases of torture in Iraq but said they were perpetrated by individuals.

"The law forbids any form of torture. There are cases in which the general prosecutor interfered and those practising such acts were punished," he said.

He said his ministry looked into "a few cases of citizens being subjected to torture (by security organs) ... and the perpetrators were punished."

In January last year, the United States, Britain, France

and Russia protested to Iraq over what they called widespread human rights abuses.

Mr. Maliki flatly denied western reports that the Iraqi government was persecuting Shiites in the south and Kurds in the north.

The issue of human rights in Iraq, in addition to compliance with U.N. weapons demands, are a stumbling block to easing or lifting U.N. sanctions.

Mr. Maliki said his ministry had judicial control over security forces, said by the West to be responsible for widespread human rights violations.

Iraqi justice would investigate such cases if brought to its attention, he said but added he was only aware of "a few cases of torture."

Asked whether Iraq would be ready to welcome human rights monitors to ascertain no rights were abused, he said: "I personally do not think there is justification for that. The situation is good."

U.N. team arrives

Deputy head of the U.N. disarmament commission Charles Duelfer and a team of weapons inspectors arrived in Baghdad on Friday, as Iraq heard that sanctions would likely stay in place for the rest of the year.

Mr. Duelfer is to have talks with Iraqi officials to prepare for a visit there next month by Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) disarmament team.

A team of 16 ballistic missile experts headed by Russian Nikita Smidovich is to spend 10 days visiting military sites, officials said.

Even today there are questions we are investigating also related to Scud missiles," said Mr. Smidovich, in Baghdad.

Mr. Ekeus, who is due in Iraq on Feb. 2, said Thursday that it would be the end of the year before he would be able to report that Iraq had complied with the weapons resolutions, easing the way to a lifting of the embargo imposed after the invasion of Kuwait.

"We haven't reached the confidence level yet. But there are clear signs of a new attitude from the Iraqi side," he said.

He will discuss the long-term monitoring of Iraq's weapons programme during his stay.

Iraq accepted long-term international inspections of its weapons industry in November, hoping for an end to the U.N. oil embargo some time this year.

Mr. Duelfer said, "We are closer to lifting the embargo simply by the fact that Iraq has acknowledged 715 after three years," referring to the Security Council resolution on monitoring Iraqi armaments.

"That's a step forward, but we don't know how long the path is and it depends on our efforts and whether Iraq will continue to do what is required by the resolutions," he said.

The council agreed on Tuesday to extend the embargo for a further two months, with its President Karel Kovanda complaining that Baghdad had still not recognised the sovereignty of Kuwait.

Several members of the council believe Iraq should be given a six- to 12-month probationary period before any easing of the embargo.



HISTORIC MOMENT: This photo shows when Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) initialled their Oslo agreement on Aug. 21, 1993. The picture was released Friday by the government of Norway in memory of Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst, whose funeral will be held in Oslo today, Saturday.

(Front left to right) Ahmad Qouriea (PLO), Mr. Holst, and Uri Savir (Israel). (Back left to right) Mohammad Abu Kosh (PLO), Hassan Asfour (PLO), Jan Egeland (Norway), Shimon Peres (Israel), Mona Jaul and Terje Rood Larsen (Norway), Yael Singer, Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundlik (Israel).

Ghali ready to authorise air strikes in Bosnia

THE HAGUE (Agencies) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Friday he would approve the use of air power in former Yugoslavia if so requested by his special representative there, Yasushi Akashi.

"Until now I have never received any request to use air power. If we receive a request I will certainly give the green light," Dr. Ghali told reporters.

Dr. Ghali, who earlier this week asked Mr. Akashi to draw up a detailed plan for a possible military operation, said he would authorise the use of air power if the replacement of Canadian troops by a Dutch battalion was prevented from taking place in the Serb-besieged enclave of Srebrenica.

"I hope that in the next few days we will have a very precise plan to use force in the case we won't be allowed to do the rotation in Srebrenica," he said.

The U.N. secretary-general has a mandate from the Security Council to approve the use of air power in former Yugoslavia.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) said last week it was prepared to use air strikes to open an air strip in northern Bosnia to aid flights and to protect Canadian troops in the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia.

Strikes would have to be authorised by the United Nations.

"Before agreeing to use air power we have to agree on what our plan of action will be and that is what we are doing

now," Dr. Ghali said.

Mr. Akashi, presented a ceasefire plan three days ago and Dr. Ghali hopes it will be agreed to by the Serbs.

"Personally I am in favour of the use of air power," said the secretary general.

NATO officials have said that Dr. Ghali must be the one to order any air strikes.

Serb gunners have surrounded Srebrenica and blocked Dutch peacekeepers from moving in and replacing Canadian U.N. troops.

Britain and France said Friday that the option of pulling all United Nations troops out of Bosnia-Herzegovina, possibly as early as this spring, was being given serious consideration.

"What we are talking about is whether the U.N. as a whole should continue to be in Bosnia and whether the time might come at some stage when it can no longer carry out its mandate," British Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said.

"That's not just a matter for the U.K. but also for France, Spain, Canada, and a number of other contingents," he told BBC radio, ruling out a withdrawal this winter, but saying it might take place in spring or early summer.

French foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duche said such a withdrawal was "a complex question which deserves serious consideration," stressing the potential consequences of such an operation on aid supplies.

While stressing that the current Geneva peace plan "remains on the table," he said,

"if diplomatic efforts fail, we will have to look at the situation again."

"Nobody is talking about withdrawing U.N. troops in the middle of winter, for humanitarian reasons," he said, without being more specific about when a pullout might be ordered.

The option of a pullout has moved steadily up the political agenda as peace efforts led by mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg staggered for one session of talks to another, with little signs of progress.

Mr. Rifkind was speaking as British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was visiting British forces in central Bosnia to assess the needs for the 2,400 British troops there. Mr. Hurd had no plans to contact the Bosnian authorities during his visit.

The airlift sustaining Sarajevo resumed Friday despite snow that blanketed Bosnia.

By late afternoon, 12 of the 16 scheduled aircraft had landed on the airport's only runway that had covered by a heavy snow hours before.

The airlift into Sarajevo, which has been under Serb siege for 21 months, was suspended Thursday after a German and an American plane were hit by bullets.

To prevent similar shootings, Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic has agreed to allow U.N. monitors into Serb territory to see if his forces are doing the shooting, Bill Aikman, spokesman for U.N. force in Bosnia, said Friday.

Zhirinovsky opposes Iraq, Libya sanctions

MOSCOW (J.T.I.) — Vladimir Zhirinovsky, head of the Russian Liberal Democrat Party, has come out in strong support for ending the embargo imposed on Libya, Iraq and Yugoslavia and advocates that Russia should continue to maintain strong ties with the Arab World.

In an interview with Al Rai correspondent in Moscow, Mr. Zhirinovsky, whose party controls 66 seats in Russian Parliament, said that Russia must maintain a result of its commitment to the embargo on the three countries. He said he

would soon submit a bill in parliament for ending such practice.

Regarding the Middle East peace process, Mr. Zhirinovsky said he found no need for Russia to co-sponsor, the peace process with the United States, since Moscow played no real role in this process.

Blaming Russia's current government, Mr. Zhirinovsky said that the present government's policies have proved practically impotent, especially in resolving complicated world political issues.

Accusing Russian Foreign

Minister Andrei Kozyrev of incompetence, Mr. Zhirinovsky said that the foreign minister has been following American-imposed foreign policy blindly and therefore there was no need for Moscow to be involved with Washington in the region.

"I am sure that Washington's policies in the Middle East would end in failure," he said.

Denying that he had any extremist demands, Mr. Zhirinovsky said that the Western media had distorted his statements.

Israeli stabbed to death near Tel Aviv

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Three Palestinians stabbed their Israeli employer to death on Friday in an orchard south of Tel Aviv, police said.

The armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Red Eagles, later said it carried out the attack.

Police said Moshe Becker, 60, was picking fruit in his orchard in Rishon-le-Tzion when the Palestinians, whom he had hired as day labourers, stabbed him in the neck and back.

The suspects, from Khan Yunes in the Gaza Strip, were later arrested near the main Erez crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip, police said.

A witness spotted the suspects fleeing the scene in a car registered in the occupied territories, and alerted police.

"We claim responsibility for the death of an Israeli at Rishon-le-Tzion," PFLP activists wrote on walls in Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

The death of Becker brought to 197 the number of Israelis killed since the beginning of the intifada in December 1987, according to an AFP toll.

Police Commissioner Rafi Peled said three Palestinian suspects were arrested at a roadblock outside the Gaza Strip. "They were blood-stained and we already have the first confessions," Mr. Peled said.

But Palestinian reporters said two suspects were detained and the third returned to his hometown, Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip, where he issued a responsibility claim.

The suspect who returned home, who was not identified, reportedly fired his gun into the air, while supporters scribbled slogans on walls claiming Becker was killed by the Red Eagles.

Israel sharply restricted the entrance of Palestinian labourers into Israel last March, after 15 Israelis were killed in a month. About 50,000 are allowed in now, less than half the previous figure. Palestinian labourers accuse employers of mistreating them and cutting their wages because competition for jobs is fierce.

Yehezkel Avraham, who owns the orchard next door, said he had warned Becker against employing Arabs, especially after the two went to police to complain a month ago that 50 or more were using the orchard to sleep at night, rather than returning to Gaza.

Column

Baby arrives with quake; just call him Rocky

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Baby Mugno's first baby arrived just after the earthquake. So the proud father hasn't had much time to pass out cigars. He's been leading the broom and bucket cleanup brigade. At 7 pounds, 8 ounces (3.4 kilograms), Joseph Anthony Mugno made his entrance 24 hours after Monday's 6.6 earthquake. Mugno sat back, awed by his wife, Laura. "She didn't have any medicine; no drugs," he recalled Wednesday. "She was just like a frontierswoman, she came through it like a champ."

At 4 a.m. Monday, four hours after rushing to Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital in Valencia, Laura Mugno's pains increased considerably. At 4:31 a.m., the building started pitching and the lights went out. "The bed was moving, my wife was contracting across the room, the tables fell over, operating lamps fell over," Mugno said.

A backup generator kept the fetal monitor beeping. Someone handed Mugno a flashlight. Their nurse had never delivered a baby in the dark, or without a doctor. The Mugnos' obstetrician couldn't make it to his house in the San Fernando Valley was destroyed by the quake. "The hospital was rocking, but she knew it was her job to get that baby out," Mugno said. For 2½ hours, they endured aftershocks and contractions. At 7:05 a.m., Laura, 31, gave birth to Joseph. "I just held the flashlight," Mugno, 34, said. Later that morning, Mugno left to check on their house, weaving around oil spills, gas leaks, cracked roads and fallen debris. "Everything in the house was totalled. Every wall item is down, my TV entertainment centre was knocked over. The refrigerator slid across the room. The computer is gone. The dressers in the bedroom were knocked over," he said. His neighbours in suburban Saugus gathered to help him clean up. So Mugno began doling out brooms and buckets and hasn't stopped. Since mother and baby arrived at their temporary mobile home Tuesday, "he's been keeping us up at night. But he's a good-looking little boy. When he's bigger, we'll always have a story to tell." And little Joseph Anthony already has a nickname. Nurses call him Rocky.

Prince Charles to oversee U.K. troop withdrawal

BERLIN (AFP) — The Prince of Wales is to attend a military parade in Berlin on May 27 marking the withdrawal of British troops from the city, which they have occupied with the other allied forces since 1945. The ceremony will coincide with the celebration of the birthday of his mother Queen Elizabeth II.

The British embassy here said. On Sept. 10 those British soldiers still present will take part in a grand farewell ceremony in the city alongside U.S., French and German forces. French President Francois Mitterrand, British Prime Minister John Major and U.S. Vice-President Al Gore have been invited to that ceremony. The Russian army will mark its departure from the reunited German capital in a more modest ceremony on Aug. 3.

Blind woman saved from fire by Moses the dog

CONCORD, New Hampshire (AP) — Moses led his blind master safely out of a house fire, surprising his owner because the dog isn't known for his brains. "The thing is Moses is an dumb I can't even fathom what he did for me," Betty Kitson said. "He can sit pretty for a bone, but until today I thought that was about as far as his talents went." The fire broke out Wednesday morning. "I woke up to what I thought was the phone ringing," said Kitson, 38. "I grabbed for it and at the same time there's Moses pressing his head and front paws up against me. The sound Ms. Kitson heard was a smoke alarm. "I think it would be one thing to be able to see a fire and get away from it," Ms. Kitson said. "But being sightless and escaping a fire in your house is terrifying." Ms. Kitson dropped to all fours, grabbed Moses' collar, and followed. "He led me out of that room. He really did," she said of the 2-year-old Labrador-golden retriever mix.

ICC court r Moses plea

HAIR (R) — Moses' plea to the International Criminal Court (ICC) officials that he was not responsible for the deaths of his two sons, was rejected.

ICC officials said they were trying to determine if Moses was guilty of the deaths of his two sons, who were killed in the 1992 genocide in Rwanda.

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Galloway in trouble for tribute to Saddam

LONDON (Agencies) — The British opposition Labour Party harshly rebuked maverick Member of Parliament George Galloway on Thursday for making flattering remarks about Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Iraqi Television.

Mr. Galloway, an outspoken opponent of sanctions against Iraq, outraged British politicians from all parties by appearing on Tuesday with President Saddam and saying: "Sir, allow me to salute your courage, power and indefatigability."

Labour's whips, or parliamentary business managers, read Mr. Galloway the riot act over the incident, which undermined Labour's claim to the moral high ground at a time of sex and money scandals involving the ruling Conservative Party.

"George Galloway has been given a severe reprimand for his behaviour and issued with a final warning with regard to future discipline," said Labour's chief whip, Derek Foster.

Prime Minister John Major told parliament that Mr. Galloway had been foolish. "There is frankly nothing to be said for him (Saddam) and nothing should be said for him by any member of this House (all Commons)," he said.

A chastened Galloway issued a statement apologising fully and regretting the embarrassment to his party. But he insisted that his remark was meant as a tribute not to President Saddam but to the fortitude of the Iraqi people.

"I begin by expressing my deep regret for any offence or pain that may unwittingly have been given to families of British victims of the Gulf war," he said.

His apology failed to satisfy the Gulf Support Group, which helps Britons affected by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent allied war against Baghdad.

Stephen Brookes, a spokesman, said it was a disgrace that Mr. Galloway had not resigned. "We're talking about a country (Iraq) that is effectively still at war with the rest of the world."

Mr. Galloway was quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency as having said at the end of a visit to the country that the embargo was not having the desired effect.

"The (U.N.) Security Council is now punishing President Saddam Hussein. It is starving infants and killing the old and sick (people)," he was quoted as saying.

Advisors quit over Chernomyrdin shift

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin announced Friday a shift in economic priorities with increased support for troubled enterprises, sparking the departure in protest of two leading Western advisers.

The change was announced at the inaugural meeting of his new cabinet government following the departure of key economic reformers.

The shift, seen as a move away from radical reform policies that concentrated on bringing down inflation, sparked immediate criticism and the resignation of two leading Western advisers associated with the previous economic programme of monetary rigour.

American Jeffrey Sachs and Swede Anders Aslund said in a statement: "We can no longer help the Russian government. The aims and the policies announced by the prime minister are strongly opposed to our own concepts."

Pro-reform economist Grigory Yavlinsky described the new team as "typically Soviet, with no policy programme, and made up of personalities whom nobody elected," Mr. Yavlinsky offered on Wednesday to head the new government, but was snubbed.

Mr. Chernomyrdin announced the change of gear following a cabinet reshuffle which saw the departure of key reformers Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov.

The Itar-Tass news agency quoted the premier's spokes-

man: Valentin Sergeyev, as saying that the fact that many firms were currently stopped is "a major problem" the government must resolve.

"It is necessary to find ways to help these enterprises, which must resume work and so they can make their contributions to the government," he quoted the premier as telling the new team.

Russians are waiting to see if the new cabinet, formed in the wake of December parliamentary elections which saw significant gains for rightwingers and ultra-nationalists, will abandon free-market reforms.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said Thursday that Russian President Boris Yeltsin was "a very tough guy" who would keep his grip on power despite the challenge from anti-reform legislators.

"I think he's got a strong grip because he's got a four-year term and a constitution that gives him more power than I've got here," Mr. Clinton said.

"I think he's going to have a challenging time," Mr. Clinton said. "But he's a very tough guy. He believes in democracy and he's on the right side of history and I think he'll continue to listen and learn and work and I think he'll do better."

Mr. Clinton visited Mr. Yeltsin in Moscow just last week and expressed strong solidarity for him despite the rise of anti-reform ultra-nationalists and communists in Russia's December election.

Clinton gets a taste of encounters of the Israeli kind

By G.H. Jansen

Special to the Jordan Times BY ROBBING U.S. President Bill Clinton of the considerable achievement that emerged from his summit meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva, Israel made that meeting a richly, but painfully, educative experience for the American leader.

The peace talks between Israel and Syria had been deadlocked long before Damascus officially broke them off in September. The talks began with the principle "full peace" for "full withdrawal" from the occupied Golan Heights but they broke down with Syria asking for a timetable for the withdrawal which Israel said it would provide only after Syria defined what it meant by "full peace."

During the press conference after the talks President Clinton, on behalf of President Assad, said that he had obtained "a commitment" for Syria, a "full peace" "normalisation" included the specific items that Israel

had been demanding — open borders, trade relations, tourism and an exchange of embassies. This was a breakthrough.

No sooner had the statement been made than Israel began rubbing it in. Israeli spokesmen began by saying that it was of little importance, even though Mr. Clinton had said several times that it was "very important." They then went on to claim that it contained nothing new despite Mr. Clinton saying that it was "the first time" that a peaceful relationship between Israel and Syria had been envisaged; that Israel wanted to hear the commitment from Mr. Assad himself; that Mr. Assad's words had to be tested in direct negotiations. The Israelis even went so far as to say that the wily and experienced Assad, "the fox," had tricked the inexperienced Clinton.

Syria first expressed surprise and then condemnation of the Israeli reaction saying that it was an attempt to buy time and to postpone withdrawal. Reports from Washington

spoke of U.S. "anger," because Mr. Clinton had persuaded Mr. Assad to make a public commitment on the details of the peace agreement on the understanding that the quid pro quo would be detail on Israeli withdrawal, which are not forthcoming. Thus the appearance has been given that Mr. Clinton either misled Mr. Assad or was unaware of Israeli thinking, and that Mr. Assad has been tricked into giving away a lot without getting anything in return: "The fox" has been outfoxed.

Israel's reason for its intense reluctance, amounting to downright refusal, to hand over any part of the Holy Land is the Zionist belief that all of Palestine "belongs" to the Jewish people as promised to them by their god, Jehovah; even though the Golan, the Biblical Goshen, is not part of the promised land.

A strong country-wide campaign against withdrawal from the Golan is being waged by Golan settlers and right-wing opposition parties — a million

leaflets, stickers and posters have been distributed with the message "Israel is with Golan" — and this has pushed Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin into stating that the issue would be settled by a referendum, the first ever for Israel. This would be a risky business because polls show that only six per cent of Israelis favour withdrawal as the price for peace because there definitely will be no peace without withdrawal.

Mr. Clinton has badly needed a foreign policy success after his humbling in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia, and he seemed to have achieved it in Geneva.

But Israel delivered a slap in the face, which ought to wake him up to the reality, enunciated years ago by King Hussein, that Israel, faced with the choice of territory or peace, has chosen territory.

But slapping the face of a very good and powerful friend like the U.S. president could be counterproductive unless that friend swallows his pride and anger and turns the other

cheek — which in this case could happen.

To strengthen their refusal to withdraw their troops from the Golan the Israelis have once again trotted out the yarn that Syrian troops there would be "a threat to Israel's security" — the standard excuse for Israel not doing any number of things.

This is a yarn for two reasons: It may be doubted whether the Israelis themselves believe it, to judge by the way in which they turn on the story for a few weeks or months, and then turn it off, when the story is no longer politically useful. Thus, about six months ago it was the received wisdom in Israel that Golan did not present such a threat, and Mr. Rabin was waxing sarcastic about the Israeli army having to fight to protect the settlers' cattle. He has never now denied that he ever said that the Golan was an integral part of Israel.

Also, even if the Syrian army does not return to the Golan, it could still lob shells

or rockets over the heads of the Israeli occupiers into the settlements and towns of Galilee that lie below the Heights because the Golan is only 32 kilometres wide. The Syrians did indulge in sporadic bombardment of these targets before the Israelis captured the Heights in 1967 and the long intervals of quiescence were imposed by Israel's deterrent power, which is even stronger now.

Israel seems incapable of seeing that the "security" peace and quiet on its borders, which it wants, would be best secured through good, non-hostile relations